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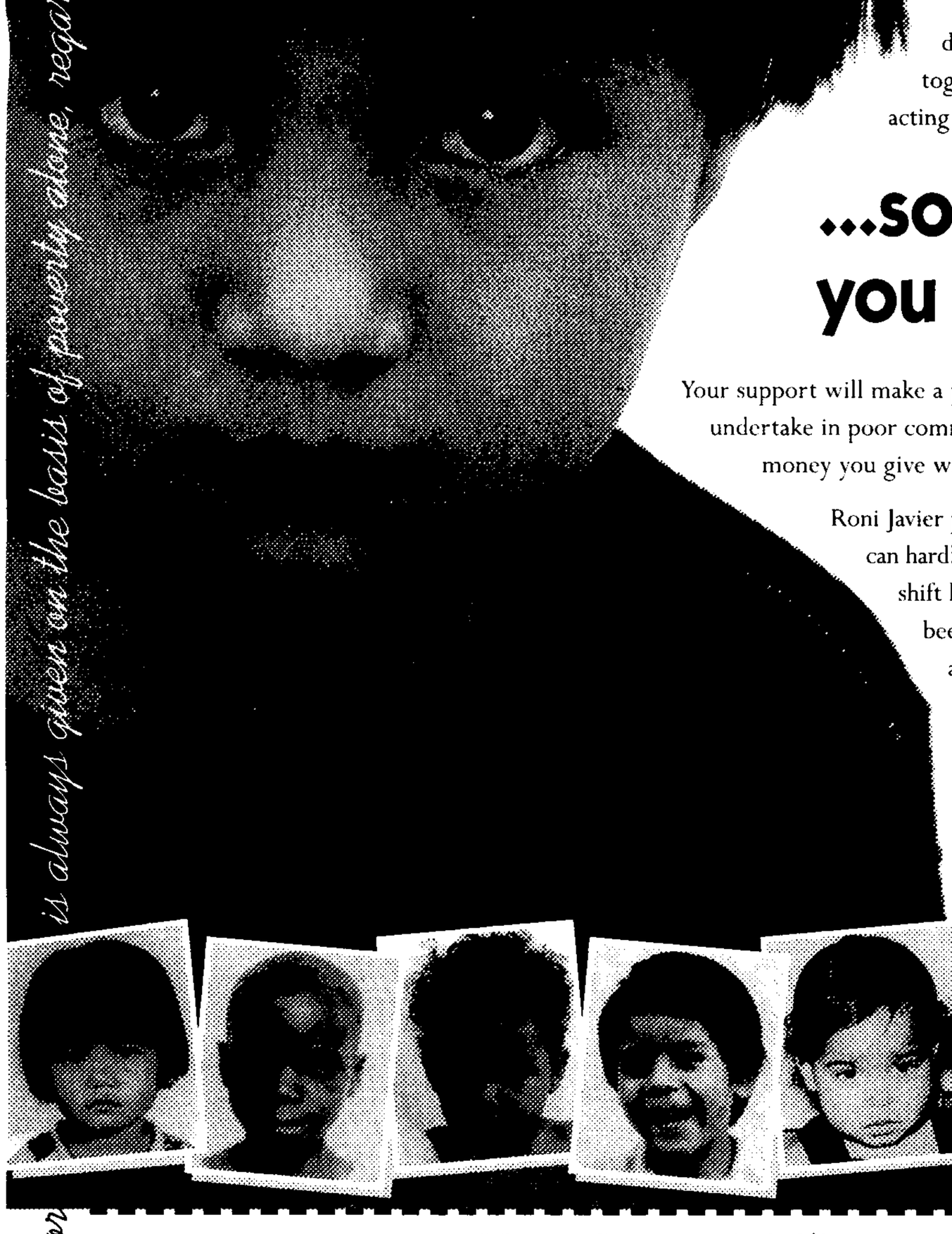
By tonight, another 35,000 children will be lost through hunger, and disease...



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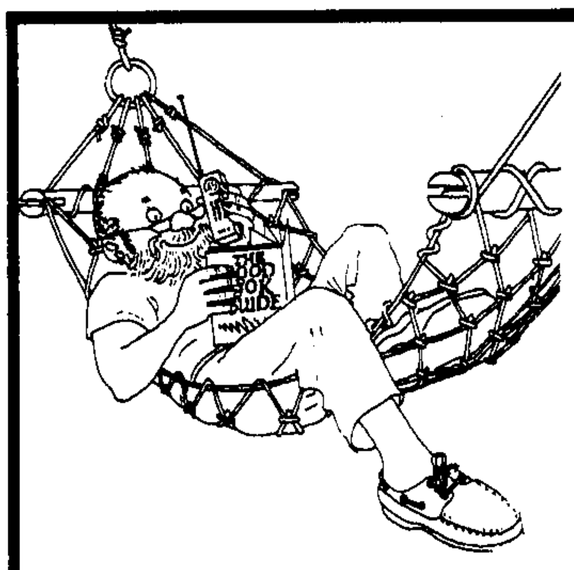

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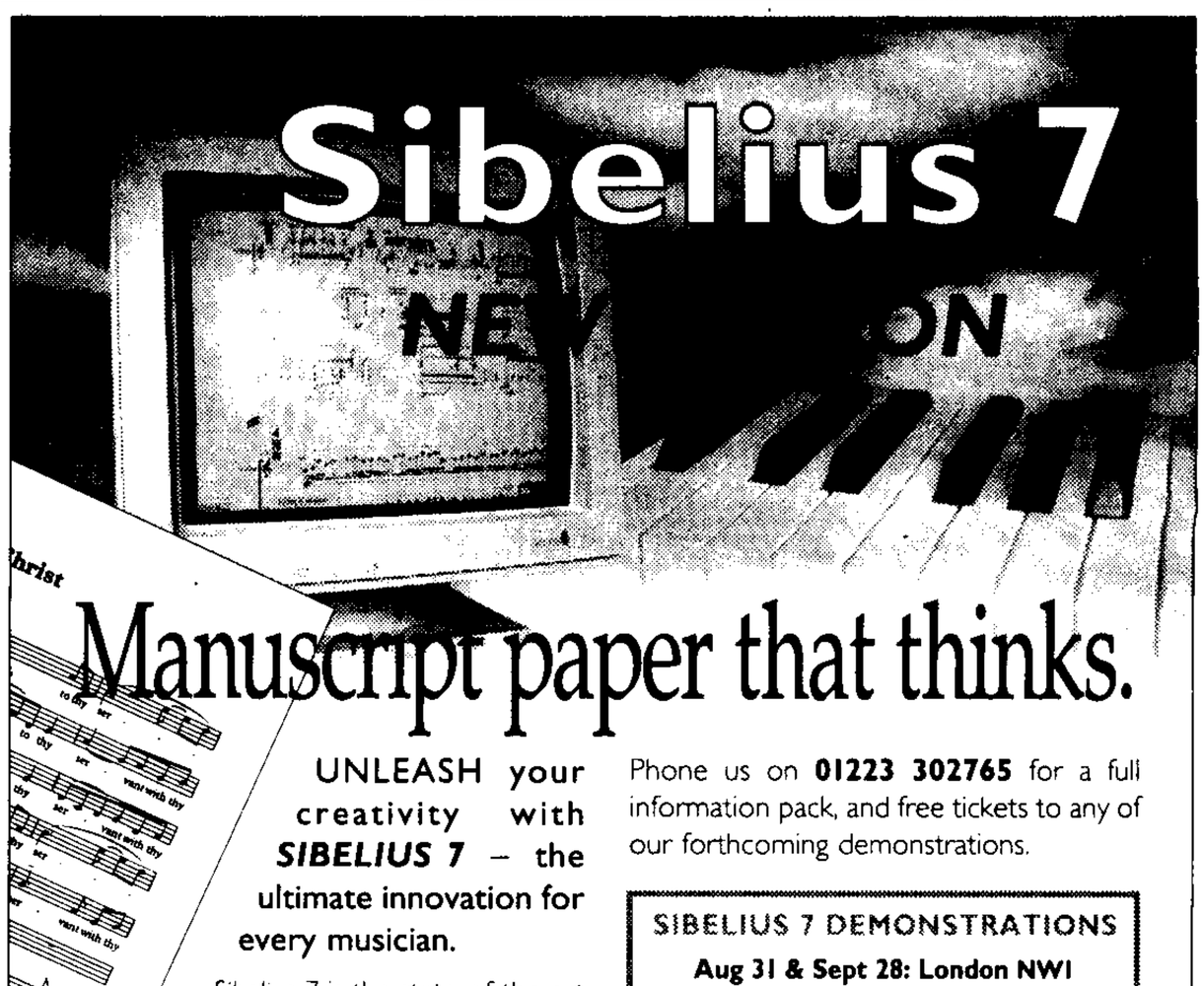

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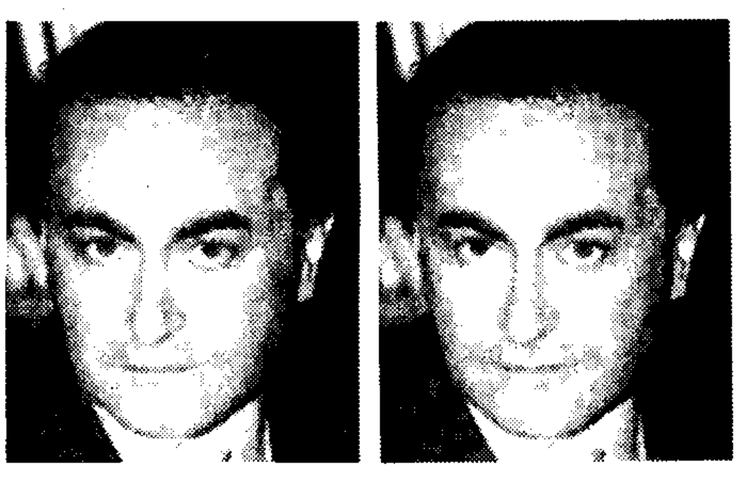
Gnome

THERE have been disturbing reports of late concerning the romantic attachments of my only son, the Hon Dionysus "Dodi" Gnome.

The suggestion has been made that he goes round failing to pay his bills, bouncing actresses and romancing cheques *(surely vice versa? E.S.)*.

I would like to make it clear that there is an impostor at large who is impersonating Dionysus and attempting to discredit both him and myself by his appalling behaviour.

However, one can easily understand how the world's media have been duped when you look at the photographs below. They show how skilfully the impostor, with the help of expensive prosthetic make-up and plastic surgery, has achieved a truly astonishing likeness.



Dionysus **Impostor**

However, if there are any further allegations against my son, I shall be forced to initiate legal proceedings under the auspices of my lawyers Messrs Sue, Grabbit and Fuck *(surely 'Ruck, who has joined the firm following the sad demise of the former partner Mr Oscar Runne'? E.S.)*.

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PRIVATE EYE COLOUR SECTION

THE loving relationship between Mohamed Fayed and his son Dodi — and the management tactics of both — were much on display in the strange story of Modena Engineering.

In the spring of 1989 Mohamed Fayed expressed his earnest interest in reviving the almost defunct Harrods Motors, and in the restoration of old classic luxury cars such as Rolls-Royces for sale under the Harrods label. In the summer of 1989, Dodi told his father about Modena Engineering, of Horsley, Surrey, which sold new and used Ferraris. Dodi thought this firm would be an excellent acquisition for the Fayed empire, and soon persuaded his father. In August 1989 Mohamed, Dodi and a couple of advisers went down to Surrey to see Modena directors. This and later meetings culminated in a fantastic Fayed offer of £2m for the company. Accountants Peat Marwick McLintock gave Modena a glowing reference.

Unhappily the Modena accounts for three months of the year 1989 were "not available" before the PMM report was drawn up. When the figures were finally delivered, they revealed substantial losses for the crucial three months — losses which made the £2m offer plainly ridiculous. Mohamed Fayed's reaction to this news was not to blame himself, his son or his accountants, but to fly into a rage with one of his senior aides — Graham Jones, an Australian accountant who had been brought in to try to steady the Fayed ship and was not remotely responsible for the missing figures.

Jones was called a "fucking liar" and a "fucking cheat" and a lot more besides and was sacked.

When he tried to get a plane back to Australia he was arrested at the airport and hauled off for questioning by Surrey police. He found out that the arrest had been inspired by allegations from the Fayeds about Modena. Jones was later released in some embarrassment and the police apologised to him.

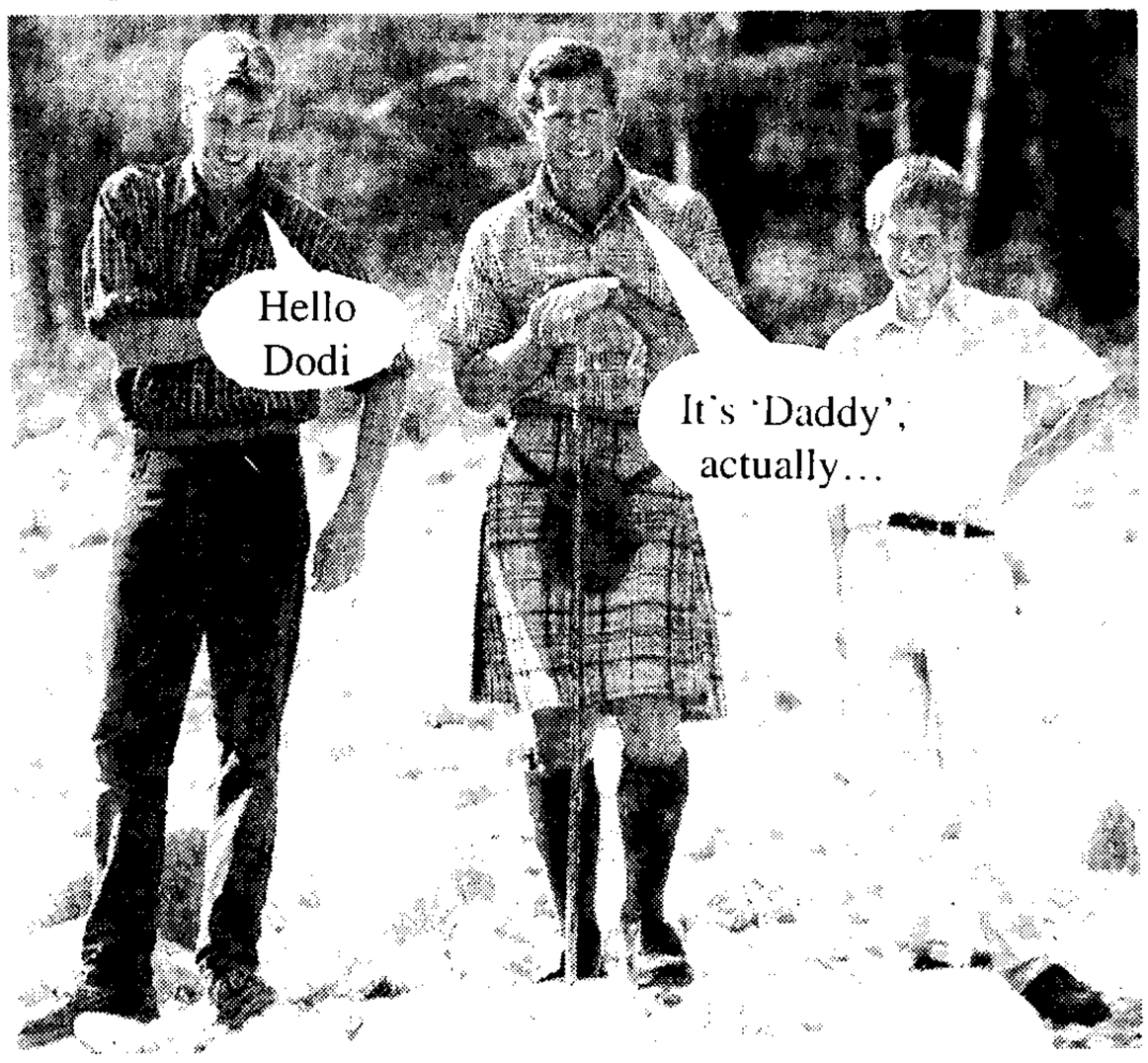
Tha Fayeds suffered rather heavily for their victimisation of Graham Jones. It was his statement to the Bank of England some months later which alerted the authorities to the sensitive question of the Fayeds' control of Harrods' Bank. In a long letter, Jones set out the reasons for his view that the Fayeds were "no longer fit and proper persons to be controllers of a bank". "Mohamed Fayed," wrote Mr Jones later, "holds a very strong view that as he owns the asset then he is at liberty to dictate the way that asset operates if he chooses. He has no respect for the restricting nature of Bank of England rules or regulations. Fayed exerts enormous pressure on executives to toe the line. He routinely uses threat and coercion to get his way."

The letter worked wonders. In June 1991, Harrods put out a press release announcing that although the House of Fraser (owned by the Fayeds) remained beneficial owners of the bank, the control of its operation had passed to a neutral city stakeholder, the Law Debenture Trust Corporation. All the voting shares were passed to the Corporation and two new directors appointed. Asked why these changes had been made a Bank of England spokesman told the *Eye*: "I'm afraid that's the sort of question we are bound by our lawyers not to answer."

WHEN the British coal mines were flogged off to R.J. Budge in 1994, his competitors and many experts on the British coalmining industry warned that he was an open-cast operator who did not have the money or the expertise to run deep mines. This was pooh-poohed as sour grapes and/or anti-free market propaganda.

The best-equipped pit Budge inherited was at Asfordby, Leicestershire, which cost the old British Coal (ie, the taxpayer) £400m. Three years on, Asfordby is losing money – largely because, as predicted, Budge has neither the money nor the expertise to deal with geological faults as British Coal did at Selby, making a hugely profitable success from a pit complex far less promising than Asfordby.

PS: Don't weep too much for Budge. When he closes the pit, he'll be able to make good much of his losses by flogging off the lucrative high-tech machinery at Asfordby, which was installed, remember, at the expense of Budge's old friend, the taxpayer.



● *All Fayed up! It's a Hallo! extravaganza! 7*

● *HP summer special: Mandelson, Cook, Hague, Blackstone 8*

● *'This Life': the hacks' favourite soap 11*

● *Dodi's fantasy film career 28*

● *Oyston, Littlewoods and the mysterious Mr More 28*

Street Of Shame

WHY did the *Mirror* con its readers by publishing a doctored photograph of Di and Dodi? Having promised to go on *Newsnight* to justify himself, Piers "Tosser" Morgan suddenly became "unavailable" two hours before he was due on air — because, as he explained, "something internal came up".

Not all over the carpet, we hope.

THE *Sun* was so confident of Bruce Grobbelaar's guilt that, shortly before the jury verdict, it despatched a self-congratulatory "information pack" to television newsrooms, complete with a glossy repro of the paper's original "world exclusive" from 1994, plus photographs of editor Stuart Higgins, deputy editor Neil Wallis and two hacks who worked on the story.

A "background briefing" boasted that it was the *Sun* wot exposed "the biggest scandal to hit British soccer in modern times".

But the jury at Winchester Crown Court disagreed, acquitting Grobbelaar on all charges — and the *Sun*'s coverage the next day was understandably muted. Its main headline was about the Football Association's appointment of a "bung buster", with Grobbelaar's acquittal being mentioned *en passant* half way down the column.

The normally brazen tabloid's embarrassment went further. When *Sun*-reading footie fans tried to call the paper's news hotline to tease hacks about the result ("Got a story? Phone the *Sun*..."), the number was unobtainable. A quick call to the operator revealed that the line had been disconnected.

THE *Observer*'s revelation that Eliza Manningham-Buller is deputy director of MI5 may have caused slight embarrassment for the paper's editor, Will Hutton — who was blissfully unaware of the scoop, being on holiday in Cape Cod at the time. For, only a few weeks ago, the Hon. Eliza came round to give Hutton a long off-the-record briefing about the fine work of the security service. They got on well, and agreed to stay in touch — a promise that she now seems unlikely to keep.

As soon as the story appeared, the spooks at MI5 promptly got on to their chums at the *Sunday Times* — which has long acted as the security service's parish magazine — to protest at the *Observer*'s "most irresponsible" journalism. "Sources said the leak will cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of pounds for the security she will now need," the *ST* reported, "and more to maintain it, including bodyguards."

How can this be, since Manningham-Buller's cover was in fact blown as long ago as 1993, when her name and photo appeared in Stephen Dorril's book *Silent Conspiracy*? Answer came there none. One reason the *Sunday Times* is so beloved by spooks — amply demonstrated at the time of the Gibraltar killings — is that it seldom lets awkward facts stand in the way of a good bit of black propaganda.

OUTRAGED members of Mensa, the smartypants society, write to tell the *Eye* more about the misdemeanours of Simon Clark, editor of their magazine and former editor of loony student mag *Campus*.

Another frequent contributor to the letters page of Clark's supposedly high-IQ magazine is Adrian Barnes, who describes himself in the *Mensa Yearbook* as being into "White Power".

Barnes was named by *Searchlight* magazine a few years ago as being a member of a Ku Klux Klan-style group in England. One of his letters was a load of balls about a "Europid" racial type. Others stated how wrong it was that people weren't allowed the freedom to speak about racism or to purchase racist reading materials.

Mensa is meant to be an apolitical organisation, but with men like Dr Madsen Pirie on its ruling committee (President of the Adam Smith Institute) and Clark running its magazine, it doesn't exactly sit on the fence.

FEAR and loathing of Labour's spin-doctors has even spread to the grey Lubianka, once headquarters of the mighty Tory Beaverbrook empire, now a kennel of Blairite poodles under Lord Hollick, the whippet-thin Labour fat cat.

The *Express on Sunday* commissioned Billericay Boadicea Teresa Gorman to write a Saturday evening Comment on cocky Robin Cook's infidelities.

Remembering the *Express* of old the fearless Gorman dashed off an excoriating piece on Labour double standards, Cook's faithlessness, etc.

Imagine her astonishment over her Sunday morning fry-up when she learned that the opening line of "her" piece read: "I feel desperately sorry for Robin Cook and his wife." Long-suffering husband Jim was asked to pass the sick bag.

O·B·N

Detail of cartoon by Blower in the Evening Standard, featuring his boss Max Hastings at a shoot. Example of what colleagues are now calling "a Blower job".

BOYISH *Independent* editor Andrew "Red Andy" Marr has been shrugging off the defection of his star columnist Helen Fielding, author of the immensely successful Bridget Jones diary.

The *Grauniad* reported last week that he was "upbeat" about her defection to *The Times*. "We're sad to see her go," Red Andy said, "but people always want to take up offers to make money. She's going for much more than we could possibly offer."

Not so. Admittedly, she was earning "only" £25,000 at the *Indie*, but Marr's big mistake was not to give her a contract. Had he tied her into a three-year deal at £50,000 p.a. when she became a best-seller, she would undoubtedly have stayed. Even when *The Times* offered her more than £100,000, she was still reluctant to leave; but when she went to inform Marr of the offer, hoping to be told how much he valued her, he merely replied with a volley of abuse, accusing the hackette of betrayal and disloyalty.

Aghast at the thought of losing their only popular feature, David "Rommel" Montgomery and *Sindie* editor Rosie Boycott then intervened, promising Fielding £120,000 if she stayed. By then, however, she was so upset by Marr's "woman-management" style that she departed for Wapping forthwith.

IS THERE no end to the talents of London *Evening Standard* hack Gervase "Barmy" Webb?

Last Tuesday, Barmy enjoyed a characteristically quiet night out. In the early hours of the following morning, he was found unconscious by a fellow-hack, Colin "The Animal" Adamson, lying prone on Adamson's balcony. Wearing nothing but a pair of Calvin Klein underpants, Webb was attached by the wrist to an equally tired, emotional and underclothed blonde sub-editor ... by a pair of pink, fluffy handcuffs.

With the events of the previous few hours a horrible blur, and the key nowhere to be found, Barmy was eventually forced to wriggle his hand free from the cuffs (which, under the pink fluff, were all-too-solid metal). He arrived for work unable to explain to puzzled colleagues what it was that could have caused the livid bruises on his right wrist...

DOMINIC LAWSON, editor of the *Sunday Hellograph*, does not enjoy universal popularity at Canary Wharf. When he went on holiday recently, the hacks raised a thunderous cheer the moment he left the building.

Even his proprietor, Conrad Black, is beginning to have doubts, complaining about Lawson's "greed and grandeur".

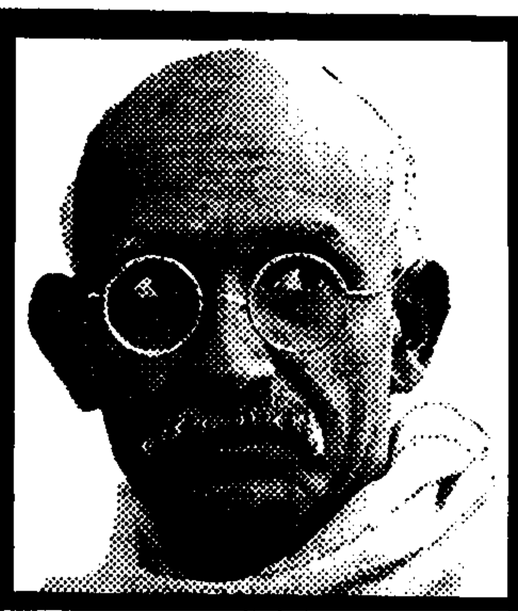
This may sound pretty rich coming from one of the grandest and greediest tycoons in the western hemisphere, but perhaps Black has a point. Having recently moved to a palatial residence in Sussex, Lawson is now planning to make it more palatial still by adding an extension for weekend guests such as his wife's best chum, Princess Diana.

Naturally, for security reasons, Dominic cannot boast about his royal friendship. So when he was telling the builder what he wanted, he *explained* that the new wing would have to be grand enough to accommodate "important people — such as Michael Heseltine".

Alas! The woman who sold him the house had no sooner moved out than she informed the local authorities, rather unsportingly, that there were bats nesting in the roof. Squads of bat protection officers immediately arrived and ordered an indefinite halt to the building work, since it is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act to distress or disturb bats in any way.

Dominic is none too pleased. And, by an amazing coincidence, the *Sunday Telegraph* of 3 August carried a full-page News Focus article fulminating about the "bureaucracy gone bonkers" which allowed householders to be "held hostage to bats" and have their lives "made a misery".

But why should Lawson be so miserable? Since he is an intimate of the Princess of Wales, surely he's quite accustomed to having batty creatures around the house?



Gandhi: image of saintliness that people could revere without having to follow

The Independent 15.8.97

Apology

The Independent yesterday mistakenly accompanied an article about Gandhi with a picture of the actor Ben Kingsley playing Gandhi. We apologise for this error to all those readers who were upset, and we apologise to Mr Kingsley.

The Independent 16.8.97

BRIAN SEWELL'S column in the *Evening Standard* launched into a tirade about "Teenage lust and public ruin" telling the 14-year-old boy in the Tracey Whalin case to "Be a man". Sewell so enjoyed his invective that he completely forgot that there was a court order forbidding the press from naming the boy because of the pending court action against Whalin. Sewell merrily named him time after time.

Odd that his editor, Max "Hitler" Hastings, let through such a blatant contempt of court, particularly as he was recently censured himself for a feature which had photos of three prisoners in an on-going trial (the six Whitemoor prison escapees) linking them to the IRA. The *Standard* was clearly in contempt of court and the case against the prisoners was stopped.

HATS OFF to Northern Ireland's *Sunday Life* for its brilliant "exclusive" on 10 August, revealing how a British ex-soldier had been offered a Housing Executive home daubed with INLA graffiti and subjected to menacing taunts from the neighbours.

He was identified in the story only as "Steve (not his real name)". The caption to an accompanying photo of the disgruntled squaddie, with his back turned to the camera, added that he was "concerned about his personal security". As well he might be: thanks to a typical *Sunday Life* cock-up, the caption then gave Steve's real name in full.

THIS month's issue of *Sainsbury's Magazine* carries an illuminating piece about the causes and effects of asthma. Top of its list of causes? "Vehicle exhausts".

Owing to, er, lack of space there was no further speculation about one of the causes of motor pollution like this; the building of huge out-of-town supermarkets which force us into our cars to reach them, then offer us cheap petrol on site to fuel our polluting journeys home.

Any questions on this piece of retailing hypocrisy should be directed to Michael Wynn-Jones, editor and owner of the magazine and husband of Sainsbury's favourite cookery writer, Delia Smith.

100 Years Ago

"I WAS happy to read my good friend Tom Stacey's letter to the *Speccie* last week," Taki writes in the *Spectator*. "It should be required reading. One hundred and five people out of a job because the scum that was — and is — *Private Eye* decided to make deliberate mischief."

The letter from Stacey, a veteran right-winger, was indeed an extended whinge against the "malignant influence" of the *Eye*, which he blamed for the collapse of his publishing house 24 years ago. A casual reader of Stacey's letter might assume that the *Eye*'s 1973 story — which claimed that his company was heavily in debt, and that several salary cheques had bounced — was incorrect.

In fact, it was all true. In a letter to the *Eye* after our original piece, he insisted that "no cheques have bounced since I have been chief executive" — a meaningless and disingenuous denial, since at the time when eight salary cheques had bounced, a few weeks earlier, his official title had been joint managing director. Now, almost a quarter of a century later, Stacey belatedly admits that his company had "cash-flow problems" and couldn't raise the £200,000 it needed merely to pay its immediate bills. Although he begged his rich friends for help, only Jimmy Goldsmith was willing to invest anything at all in the firm — other tycoons apparently being able to recognise a sinking ship when they saw one.

Stacey's career as a bookman has always been hampered by his enthusiasm for commissioning tedious right-wing tomes which no one wants to read. Even the disaster of 1973 failed to teach him this lesson: three years later, under a new imprint, he published *The Greek Upheaval*, a study of the Colonels' regime in Greece — a book so obscure, and so justly forgotten, that it doesn't even appear in the British Library catalogue. The author was none other than his "old friend" Taki Takalotofcoke-upthenos.

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! I AM glad to see that dear Tiny Rowland is not a man to bear grudges. Though he may have had his tiffs with Mohamed Al-Fayed in the past, Tiny tells me that he shares the universal rejoicing at the fairytale romance between Mohamed's son Dildo and Princess Diana — so much so that he has sent the Queen a seven-page affidavit sworn by a woman who claims to be an old acquaintance of Mo-Fo, which includes some vivid reminiscences of the Harrods boss and his great generosity. His purpose, I assume, is to reassure Her Majesty that Mohamed is a suitable holiday host for the royal grandsons Wills and Harry.

In a typically thoughtful gesture, Tiny has sent a copy to Tony Blair, in case he is short of holiday reading.

HALLO! *THE Marquesa bought a copy of Punch last week, eager to see what sport the fearless mickey-takers at her favourite "humorous magazine" would have with the romance of Diana and Dodi.*

After carefully scrutinising every one of its 60 pages, however, I was unable to find a single word — not even a cartoon — on this most topical and satireworthy of subjects. How puzzling!

HALLO! I CAN barely keep back the tears as I watch the television coverage of dear Diana's mission to Bosnia to campaign against the scourge of landmines. She looks sexily compassionate, yet at the same time compassionately sexy.

I am outraged, however, when the BBC newsreader apparently describes my best friend as 'easy to lay but difficult and expensive to get rid of'. I am only prevented from calling my friend John Birt to give him a dressing down when my butler points out: "I believe they were referring to the *mines*, madam."

HALLO! I AM vexed to learn that I will not to be able to buy my late friend the Duchess of Windsor's lingerie at the Sotheby's sale in New York next month of the contents of the Windsors' Bois de Boulogne home. The auctioneers claim that putting dear Wallis's drawers under the hammer, as it were, would be in poor taste. It occurs to me, however, that this means Mohamed Fayed must be, er, hanging on to them. Memo to self: make Mohamed an offer before he thinks of giving it all to Diana for her trousseau!

HALLO! WHAT is Glyndebourne coming to? Jerome Savary's production of Rossini's saucy opera *Le Comte Ory*, about randy goings-on in medieval Touraine — a sort of *Carry On Crusading* — would not be acceptable on the television before the nine o'clock watershed, I fear. The opening of the second act features a bevy of topless damsels consoling each other in a communal bath as they pine for their loved ones battling Johnny Saracen in the Holy Land.

I am reassured, however, when Glyndebourne supremo Sir George Christie's spokesman tells me it is all done in the very best possible taste. Alas another female member of the audience becomes over-excited and begins to shout obscenities during the topless scene. Tut! Tut!

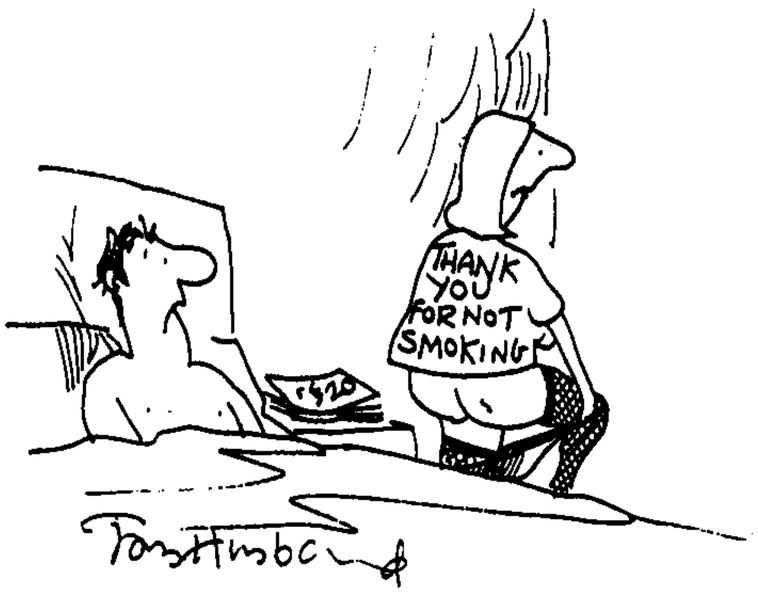
HALLO! TIM "Flasher" Bell, the wondrous PR man adept at fishing celebs out of hot water, seems to be losing his touch.

Bell recently acted for Prince and Princess Michael of Kent after the striking couple had a spot of financial bother with an alpine tour guide who had taken them around the Austrian mountains in February but still hadn't been paid his fee of £1,850.

The *Express*'s William Hickey sniffed out the royal debt story and tried to get a comment from their Royal Highnesses. Soon the newspaper men had Tim Bell on the phone ready to convince them that there was nothing in their story.

"She [the princess] is not liable for the guide's bill," he insisted sniffily. "Nor that of a taxi firm also awaiting payment for services." Naturally the hack's ears pricked up. What unpaid taxi bill? Bell's smooth PR man's charm temporally deserted him as he spluttered and tried to cover his tracks. Poor old Flasher!

HALLO! *"YOU can never trust a French dentist," my old friend Mobutu Sese Seko, ex-president of Zaire, said to me the other day as we reclined at his South of France poolside. "Which is why when I had a toothache recently I chartered a British Airways Concorde to fly me from Nice to Heathrow for a check-up with my man in London" Funnily enough, when I make inquiries to BA about using the same facility myself, they strenuously deny renting a Concorde to my friend for a day at £50,000 an hour. He, however, insists that he did. A million pound toothache? That's what the Marquesa calls style!*



HALLO! I SEE that my friend Lord Brocket is in trouble with the governor of Ford Open Prison, Sussex, after taking a minicab to see a lady physiotherapist in a nearby village. Apparently the governor, Roger Brandon — amusingly known as "The Gnome" to inmates — does not believe that the "Ugandan" type of physiotherapy in question has any long-term therapeutic effect.

I do hope that The Gnome (no relation to my distinguished employer, by the way) has not decided to be so strict with Charlie on account of my item in the last edition of the *Eye*, which pointed out the enthusiasm with which Ford inmates are joining community "service" projects outside the gates.

Had Charlie really wished to try to "get his leg over", in vulgar prison parlance, I would have advised him to join the prison drama group. My Ford correspondent writes: "The amateur dramatics are tripe but the drama hut is untouched by Dad's Army — as the screws are called here — and the men get the help of local young girls! And these girls come in unsearched! If only The Gnome knew!"

'The Marquesa'

WHATEVER the outcome of Labour's probe into the murk surrounding the death of Paisley MP Gordon McMaster, one key figure in the affair is likely to be untroubled by the party's threats of censure.

He is independent councillor Paul Mack, a former deputy leader of the ruling Labour group on Renfrew district council who, with McMaster's erstwhile colleagues Tommy Graham and Lord (Don) Dixon has been accused of spreading rumours about McMaster before the latter's suicide.

Mack is a close associate of both Graham and Richard Vassie, a Scottish Nationalist councillor who was suspended from the party after he tried to broker a story that the dead MP had had an affair with a schoolboy.

Mack's scathing repartee is widely feared and his hard-hitting reputation is well-deserved. In July 1994 he appeared at Paisley Sheriff Court accused of assaulting his former girlfriend and causing a breach of peace at her home. Despite his bizarre protestation that he had been the victim of a "plot to compromise him", Mack was convicted on both counts and fined £200.

FOLLOWING the "Dave Spart" Communique by Dr Margaret Cook — that Tory cuts in the health service had been responsible for Cocky Robin running off with his secretary — another leading Labourer has cited "long hours at the Commons" as the reason she's walking out on her husband of 20 years.

Jane Kennedy, an influential member of the Government Whips office, MP for Liverpool Wavertree and the leader of the Labour friends of Israel, has discovered she has no time for Co-op political organiser Malcolm any longer. The hapless husband said at the weekend that "to my knowledge there is no other person in her life".

He would be the last to know, of course.

THE *Guardian* reports that the formerly independent-minded MP Clare Short is now "conforming" to Labour's new regime. Up to a point, Lord Mandelson! In an interview with *CAFOD Magazine*, the journal of the Catholic development/aid charity, she is asked how she would like to celebrate the new millennium. She replies: "How much better than some silly, temporary building in Greenwich is a commitment to work with other countries to eliminate abject hunger, which we could do!"

Silly? Temporary? The prime minister is personally committed to making the Millennium Dome a tremendous success. Perhaps nice Mr Mandelson needs to have another quiet word with Ms Short.

IN ITS front page story on the House of Lords and the Nolan Commission, the *Times* helpfully listed the directorships of Lord Parkinson, Tory Party chairman, which he has forgotten to submit to the Lords Register of Members' Interests.

The list was copious enough (Planet Online, Amertrans, Hertfordshire Business Centre, Integrated Technology [Europe], Jarvis Harpenden Holdings, Midland Expressway, Mobile Phone Supercover, Odyssey Corporation and Resolution Security). But *Eye* readers may well ask what has happen to all those directorships which have found their way into the *Eye* in recent years, notably:

Vanwell Data Systems which Parkinson joined on February 1984. Vanwell ran into trouble in 1986 when notorious con-man John Entwhistle was arrested in Antwerp with a £40,000 computer he was trying to smuggle into Hungary. Vanwell's offices were raided and a number of conspiracy charges followed (Entwhistle was sent to prison for a year). A few weeks after the charges, Parkinson, who as a trade minister had piloted through Parliament the Bill under which the charges were brought, resigned from the Vanwell board.

Usborne, a pig meat company of which Parkinson became chairman in 1992, and whose shares were suspended in April 1994 in anticipation of enormous losses (see *Eye* 850).

Starmin, a construction group which Parkinson also joined as deputy chairman in 1992. Losses were £12m in his first year on the board, so he was made chairman. Losses promptly doubled — to £23m — and the company called in a new management team (see *Eye* 850)

Eurorail, one of the consortia which bid for the high-speed rail link to the Channel Tunnel. Parkinson became chairman perhaps because as the Secretary of State for Transport who first mooted the privatisation of the railways he promised that "not a penny" of public money would go into the the Chunnel link — a prediction which proved completely wrong (see *Eye* 857). Eurorail didn't get the contract.

Hague ... youngest Tory leader in 200 years

The Sun, Kuala Lumpur

"PONGO", the "Voice of Belgrade" — Bob Wareing MP — is determined to continue his unequal contest with Chief Whip Nick "Newcastle" Brown.

Displaying hitherto unsuspected standards of literacy, Pongo has submitted a voluminous complaint to Sir Gordon Downey, alleging that Brown is guilty of "concealment, fabrication and intimidation".

The professionally laid-out indictment implies that Brown's hatred for the butchers of Sarajevo lies behind what amounts to a conspiracy against Wareing for his pro-Serbian views.

A leading Serbian businessman has consulted Peter Carter-Fuck, who has sent a stiff legal letter to the Chief Whip — expensively unaware that Brown's actions are covered by Parliamentary privilege.

Sources close to the Labour Whip say that Newcastle "is frothing at the mouth" about Pongo. They add that the motion to suspend the shamed MP from the House for five days is amendable ... and that the days could easily become years.

THE uproar about the cockup over students' fees and the gap year has descended on the head of Baroness Blackstone, Education Minister. This is very fitting.

She is chairman of the Institute for Public Policy Research, whose members were supposed to be the backroom geniuses working out the plans for the (future) Labour government. This is one area where their research was lacking.

The Institute, founded and subsidised by Lord "Alco" Hollick from his vast fortune, is housed in luxurious premises in Covent Garden — even the lavatory taps are gold-plated.

Its luminaries have flocked into government. Hollick himself is adviser to the Department of Trade and Industry but is discreetly omitted from its official list of advisers because he is not paid (he doesn't need the money). Others include Patricia Hewitt, who went by way of Arthur Andersen to the Government benches, Baroness Elizabeth Symons, now Foreign Affairs spokesperson in the House of Lords, and Dan Corrie, "special adviser" to the DTI.

"Heart of cabbage, eye of potato, ear of corn... I hate these vegetarian spells"

POOR Peter Mandelson, Minister Without Portfolio. Not only has he been accused of media manipulation and getting too big for his boots while Tony Blair has been on holiday, but he also has some constituency bother to contend with.

The Hartlepool MP has been called as a prosecution witness in a case to be held at Teesside Crown Court against his former agent, Bernard Carr, who is accused of seven counts of obtaining money by deception and one count of attempting to obtain money by deception.

Mandy's presence has also been requested by the defence team, who are apparently eager to cross-examine the Prince of Darkness. Carr was Mandy's agent for the 1992 election. The case has been brought against him over a total of £732.27.

The Teesside courts are anticipating large attendances for Mandy's day in the witness box.

Meanwhile Mandelson's craftily constructed Code of Conduct for Ministers, which includes a clause requiring them to record all conversations and lunches with journalists and inform the Number 10 press office, threw up an intriguing possibility. If ministers were to be obliged to make such records, surely they (or the Minister without Portfolio in particular) could also be obliged to tell MPs which journalists they had lunched with if questioned directly in Parliament? Alarm bells immediately rang and the Spinning Minister hastily made it known to Her Majesty's elected representatives that he would henceforth not be answering any questions about his engagements.

FABIAN HAMILTON, MP for Leeds North-East, has been ruffling Yorkshire feathers with his condemnation of dodgy business practices. Hamilton won the seat for Labour after taking over from Liz Davies, the leftie candidate deselected by the NEC. He has been a perfect Blairite since, getting plenty of publicity in his local press with his public denunciation of "get-rich-quick" schemes which dupe consumers and "could mean curtains for your operation".

This won praise from the consumer affairs minister Nigel Griffiths, but not from consumers in the area who had brushes with Fabian Hamilton's own business ventures. Hamilton owned a graphics and design company which went into liquidation but was soon started again under a new name. He was selected for the Leeds seat despite allegations that his business record was, er, questionable and despite facing a court case over multiple breaches of the companies act.

MOTHERWELL North MP Dr John Reid won plenty of plaudits when he took part in a debate in January on the plight of former Second World War PoWs. Pleading on behalf of those whose wages had been reduced while they were held captive by the dastardly Hun he said: "It is quite literally a major debt and a matter of honour ... a matter of principle is at stake."

Now Labour is in power and Dr Reid is the armed forces minister with a penchant for donning flak jackets and rallying the troops. So why did the Ministry of Defence recently announce that a review of the case of the PoW survivors had found no basis for their claim for repayment of back pay?

One former PoW, 81-year-old Group Captain Alec Ingle, was incensed by the MoD decision, and responded: "Our case was totally supported by Dr Reid in opposition, but now he is in government it would appear he has done a complete U-turn."

Similarly when the Royal British Legion put forward proposals for an ex-service affairs unit in the Ministry of Defence last November, the Labour Party was most enthusiastic.

The then shadow defence secretary Dr David Clark said: "I have written to the Royal British Legion to inform them of Labour's support for their campaign.

"At a time of year when our thoughts turn to those who have served our country in time of war we must not forget the interests of our veterans throughout the rest of the year."

Seven months on the freshly-appointed armed forces minister, Dr Reid, gave a reply to a parliamentary question on the Royal British Legion's proposal.

He said the Government is "aware of the proposals" but that it was a matter "which needs careful consideration".

WILLIAM "Big Boy" Hague's biggest problem right now is raising enough money to keep Conservative Central Office going.

The boy's chances of attracting substantial donations were not improved by his decision to vilify Lord Simon and to sneer at him in the Commons for being a "rich man".

A bigger long-term problem for the Tories is that the majority of past corporate donors are now happy enough with Blair's acceptance of the EU social chapter and the rest of the Amsterdam decisions. Hague needs to be anti-EU to put that famous clear blue water between the Conservatives and Labour ... but can't afford to be anti-EU if he wants industry to cough up for his planned party reorganisation. The result is likely to be, er, Labour for the next 10 years at least.

HAS the whole of "New" Labour gone to Tuscany for the summer?

Labour party member and practitioner of complementary medicine Pat Rattigan of Chesterfield was keen to ask about Government policy on excessive GP drug prescription, so he sent a letter three times to health secretary Frank Dobson on the issue — no reply. Then he asked agriculture secretary Jack Cunningham about safety testing on agricultural chemicals. Cunningham did not acknowledge the letter. Another missive, to agriculture minister Jeff Rooker about vitamin B6, also remains unanswered.

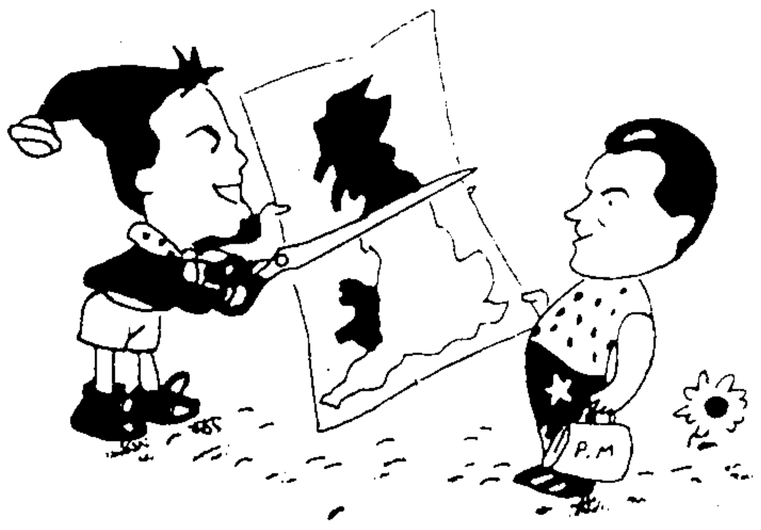
Four copies of Mr Rattigan's new booklet on vaccination were sent, recorded delivery, to the four health ministers — no answer.

All this in spite of the party document "Complementary Therapies in the NHS" — which Mr Rattigan helped to write.

Another frustrated letter writer is the Suffolk Pensioners Association, which used to ask social security secretary Peter Lilley for information about the rate at which the National Insurance Retirement Pension was being paid. Lilley would always reply promptly within 10 days.

Since May the same Association has been trying to get the same information from the new social security secretary Harriet Harman — but in three months they have heard nothing from her department. Whatever happened to the caring, sharing "New" Labour party?

Noddy Breaks a Promise



"No cuts under Labour!" said Noddy

(This strip has been judged "politically incorrect" by Mr T. Dalyell)

MATTHEW Gunther-Bushell, spin doctor to the Welsh "No" Campaign against devolution has had a somewhat chequered career. The only big political job on his CV was as speech writer to Jonathan Aitken. Oops.

He trampled through his years at the Welsh Young Conservatives staying strictly to the right fringe of the party until, at the end of last year, he went to work for the late, unlamented Sir Jammy Goldsmith — although he says he did not join the Referendum Party.

Gunther-Bushell has now been appointed to assist the inexperienced Robert Hodge (son of Jersey-resident millionaire Sir Julian Hodge, who is bankrolling the "No" campaign). The geriatric Lord Tonypandy has been appointed as the campaign's figurehead.

This is not the first time that the Lord has joined forces with Sir Julian Hodge over Wales. Thirty years ago Lord Tonypandy, then plain George Thomas, Secretary of State for Wales, backed Hodge's plans to set up a Bank of Wales.

In 1968 George Thomas had set up the Council for Wales (itself an early form of devolution) and appointed Hodge to it. Its first job was to consider the availability of public and private capital in Wales and its finance panel produced a report that concluded "a financial institution with a commitment to Wales ... is urgently required".

When the report was accepted by the Welsh Council it emerged that Hodge had already registered a company with a proposed capital of £5m to be called, er, the Bank of Wales.

It was not until the Heath government that the Bank of Wales was given the go-ahead but the groundwork had been laid in the dying days of the former Labour government. George Thomas's long-standing support was rewarded in 1973 when he became a shareholder and director of the Commercial Bank of Wales.

With political novices and old has-beens like this lined up against them, little wonder that the "Yes" campaigners feel they have fate on their side. It looks as if the Tories are headed for their second wipeout in Wales within a year.

LEAST popular champagne guzzling session at the forthcoming Labour conference in Brighton will surely be that hosted by Sir Colin Marshall and Robert Ayling of British Airways.

Having created the worst outbreak of mass sickness since the plague with their threat to sack striking employees — thousands of whom promptly handed in medical certificates excusing them from work — the BA bully boys are to grasp the nettle of restoring relations with Labour at the Brighton Thistle hotel from 10 till midnight on 29 September.

Fragrant high-heeled cabin staff are expected to picket the bash (some stewardesses are expected on the picket also). Large scale apologies for absence, backed by sick notes, are expected from any Labour MPs worth their salt.

'Backbiter'

The New Boys are on holiday (Tuscany)

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE wretched Millennium again, sorry. I keep banging on about the great plastic dome at Greenwich which nobody (apart from Lord Rogers of Riverside and Sir Stephen Bayley) wants, making the point that the Millennium only has Christian significance or it has none (and who has noticed, by the way, the subtlety with which My Lord Rogers is dealing with the huge chimney which must stick up through it to ventilate the Blackwall Tunnel beneath?).

But we mustn't forget that, up and down the land, Christian congregations are using the prospect of a change of digit to spoil the churches they have inherited from the past.

Take the example of Eccleshall Parish Church, outside Sheffield. A glossy leaflet has been produced asking for a mere £800,000 for "equipping All Saints for the new millennium". This inspiring document contains messages from the Archbishop of Canterbury — "I was delighted to hear of your exciting plans. May God bless you as you develop your church buildings to meet the needs of the changing world"; from the Archbishop of York — "a right treasuring of these architectural gems must be balanced with a subordinating of any church building to the demands of the Gospel"; from the Bishop of Sheffield — "'Change and decay in all around I see' says the hymnwriter: Wrong! Decay comes when there is no change"; and The Lord Dainton. The last should give cause for concern as it was he who persuaded Mrs Thatcher to give us the New British Library. "In my opinion," he tells us, "what is proposed enhances that 'fitness for purpose' appropriate to a church at the end of the Second Millennium A.D."

So, what is proposed? Out with the high altar, out with the choir stalls, out with all the pews in the nave and the old font. Instead there will be lots of comfy chairs on a carpeted floor and a new communion table on a platform projecting into the crossing — the usual sort of thing, in fact. As for the old, useless sanctuary, it will be filled with chairs. "The ravages of time, changes in cultural expectations and the constant imperative to evangelism ensure that every Church will occasionally face the challenge of reordering. It has ever been thus," insists the vicar, the Rev. Dr Peter Williams.

Should we worry? Well, there is no mention in the glossy brochure, of course, but All Saints, Eccleshall, happens to be the creation of two of the most interesting church architects of modern times. The nave of 1788 was cleverly revamped by George Pace in the 1960s but, above all, there are the transepts and the chancel, part of an ambitious rebuilding scheme begun in 1906 by Temple Moore. Moore, the subject of a new biography, was arguably the best Gothic revivalist of the lot: an artist who knew the Gothic he loved so well it never inhibited him as a brilliant planner of working churches. The eastern parts of Eccleshall Parish Church form a noble, magnificent fragment, whose meaning and purpose will be thoughtlessly trivialised by the reordering planned by Peter Wright & Martin Phelps of Buxton.

And, as both English Heritage and the Victorian Society don't seem to mind too much, nothing can be done.

'Piloti'

"Coffee! Thanks, put it there... no, there... no, over there..."

TV

Birds Of A Feather Selection Box (BBC1)

Good Neighbours (BBC1)

THE traditional summer bleat of TV viewers and critics is the quantity of repeats. Every year, the BBC promises to do something about the reruns. This year, cutting their losses, they have decided to do something *with* the reruns.

Specifically, what they have done is to slice up old shows and use them as the bread in a ham sandwich. In *Birds Of A Feather Selection Box*, celebrity fans of Sharon & Tracey from Chigwell picked favourite clips from the sitcom. And, with new episodes of *Neighbours* running twice a day on BBC1, the channel catered for those difficult Ramsey Street gaps in between by showing, mid-morning, *Good Neighbours*, a show in which admirers of the Aussie Soap select favourite moments.

Birds Of A Feather Selection Box — being a peak-time programme — is the more reprehensible. Various C (or even D) list celebs explain why they think the show is a success. You've heard of literary criticism. This is sub-literate criticism. In place of the Leavisite school of criticism, we got the disciples of Leave-It-Aht.

Soccer agent Eric Hall thinks that: "It's wunnerful. I know these people." Peter York is of the opinion that: "It's middle-aged girl power. They are semi-liberated women." Sharon Gilhooly (who she?) has come to the conclusion that: "I think you can tell Sharon is the younger sister." Rabbi Lionel Blue — who might have been quite interesting on the Jewish stereotyping of Dorien Green — is restricted to the illumination that: "Tracey gets things wrong." Dress designer David Emanuel believes that: "Sharon's timing is impeccable."

The real honey, though, is a humourless American woman billed as "columnist Karen Krizanovich". Commenting on a scene in which Dorien has her false fingernails sliced off by an Essex girl gang and passes out, Karen analyses: "She faints because they take away her femininity — and that's all she's got." Er, yes. Remarking on Dorien's sexual promiscuity, Karen com-

ments: "Dorien's the female equivalent of the Dartford Tunnel — everyone's had her." Er, no, actually. Very few people have "had" the Dartford Tunnel but an awful lot have "been through it" — which is the point and the wording of the Essex girl joke with this punchline.

In one sense, these programmes are very clever. When the BBC announces in its next annual report that the percentage of re-runs in summer has fallen, bear in mind that both *Birds Of A Feather Selection Box* and *Good Neighbours* (shown every summer's day on BBC1) technically count as "new" programmes in any such tally.

In fact, the only obvious point of such programmes is as statistical sleight of hand. In every other way, the *Selection Box* is a fantastically bad idea. The brief extracts from the show being given the treatment are inevitably less satisfying for aficionados (presumably the target audience) than a whole episode would be.

More worryingly, *Birds Of A Feather* — on form, one of the best of the British sitcoms — was ruthlessly exposed by the concentration on its recurring features. David Emanuel's admiration for Sharon's withering put-downs, for example, was inevitably illustrated by a string of them. This revealed a formulaic string of gags about Dorien's promiscuity, almost pathologically obsessed with the pun possibilities of the word "drawers". Similarly, when David or Ted or possibly Rabbi Lionel commended the facial expressions of Tracey, a medleyofgurningfrom Linda Robson had the unintended effect of suggesting the limitations of the actress's rangeofreactions.

Because broadcasters traditionally overwork any new idea, there are bound to be more and more of these resprayed repeats. This week, Terry Wogan hosted a "tribute" to the late Dick Emery, which consisted of luvvies selecting cherished lumps of his stuff. Ronnie Barker's return to television after nearly 20 years of retirement will reportedly feature the comedian linking clips from his old shows. All of these programmes will show on the BBC ledger as the original programmes, but the viewer knows differently. Improbably enough, the BBC this summer has come up with a new kind of repeat which is even more irritating than the old kind.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

WHEN veteran BBC newsreader Alan Towers signed off his last edition of *Midlands Today* by slagging off BBC bosses as intellectual "pygmies" in grey suits "wearing blindfolds", he provoked a flood of calls to BBC's Pebble Mill headquarters in Birmingham. There seems to be some confusion about what the callers were saying.

Early reports — within two hours of the broadcast — said that no official BBC source was available to comment, but quoted a harassed security guard as saying: "We have had hundreds of calls... mainly agreeing with Alan, although some have been complaining."

Half-an-hour later, a BBC spokesman was available to, er, clear up any confusion: "We have had a large number of calls and the majority have been complaining about what Alan said, although we have had a few calls supporting him."

SO Tony Garnett, the genius behind BBC2's *This Life*, has left his options open. Will there, won't there be another series? Four million viewers are on tenterhooks.

According to a report in *The Guardian* Media Diary, Garnett hit on the bright idea of dropping all the current cast after his experience with his previous hit, *Between The Lines*. Apparently the poor love was pressured by the BBC into making a "final, compromised series of the cop drama" and was "unhappy with the outcome".

Eye readers will remember that the BBC was certainly unhappy with the outcome, as it was that "final, compromised" series which contained an episode called *Unknown Soldier*. The BBC subsequently had to admit the episode had been based, uncredited, on a book called *Open Verdict* about the mysterious deaths of 25 defence scientists, and ended up shelling out a substantial five-figure sum to the book's author, investigative journalist Tony Collins.

Meanwhile, *This Life* addicts can relax. It must surely only be a matter of time before Garnett gets the "inspiration" for another series.

BIRTSPEAK

"THE Facilities Management Group was launched earlier in the year when World Service's Facilities Management department and Woodlands' Site Resources department joined what was then the Customer Service Group (Facilities Management, Contract Services, Transport, Travel and Procurement). With a new organisational structure (Premises Management, Procurement and Contract & Commercial Services) and a range of new 'key' appointments, the relaunched Group is moving forward and making improvements on a number of fronts..."

Backstage, The Facilities Management Group newsletter, August 1997

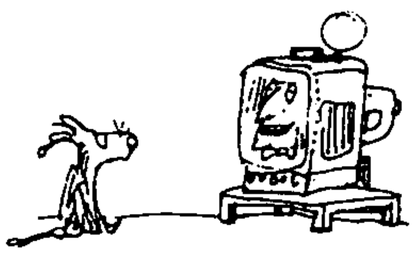
Judy & The Beanstalk
RICHARD AND I HAVE MADE IT KNOWN THAT WE'LL BE AVAILABLE FOR PANTO THIS YEAR
BECAUSE WE'RE POPULAR AND LOVABLE!
OLD FARMYSTEAD
OH NO YOU'RE NOT!

THE hallucinogenic qualities of the Teletubbies, first revealed in the *Eye*, have become a hot talking point on the many new websites devoted to the nation's favourite TV show. The BBC, alas, is not amused. The editor of one Teletubbies site returned from holiday recently to find a fierce e-mail from the lawyers of the "BBC Intellectual Property Department".

Messrs Sue Grabbit & Runne pointed out that the site included "screen grabs, stills, sound recordings and logos" from Teletubbyland, which had been copied without permission. Fair enough, thought the anorak; but just as he was starting to delete the copyright material, he noticed the next paragraph.

"The BBC does not wish to discourage fans of its programme from discussing them on the Internet, but ... given the target audience of Teletubbies is pre-school children, your material is in danger of compromising the programme's intentions. Ragdoll, the producers of Teletubbies, are as alarmed as we are and are justifiably concerned to see that this misrepresentation stops."

In other words, all the jokey discussion about Ecstasy-fuelled fantasies had to go as well. This seems slightly self-defeating: doesn't the BBC realise that if it tries to discourage drugged-up students from watching the show, the ratings will plummet to near-zero?



RUMOURS are rife in Anglia TV that deputy managing director Malcolm "mincing" Allsop (*Eyes* passim) is to be chopped.

His latest programme disaster, *Warehouse*, has tested the patience of TV watchdogs at the ITC by featuring penis extensions, male escorts, male breast implants, female nipples galore and a suggestive quiz whose winners get to romp in bed with a blonde while the witless audience cheers them on. The ITC's regional office in Norwich has already reported the show to its London HQ, whose powers include swingeing fines and the removal of station licences.

Ultra-tacky Jerry Hayes, star-struck former MP, quit as a *Warehouse* presenter last week, saying "there are some things even Jerry Hayes won't do". *(Surely not? — Ed.)*

When ITV network boss Marcus Plantin departs shortly, it seems almost certain that his successor will axe Plantin's other network shows — including the brain-dead *The Time, The Place* and the unspeakably vulgar *Vanessa* series. When that happens, Anglia will have no further use for Allsop, and he will walk the plank.

But is he the only culprit? Since United News and Media took over Anglia, it has sacked a third of the workforce — 250 people — and left a once-proud regional station drowning in smut. And who is the boss of United News and Media, who has presided over this triumph? Step forward socialist peer Lord Hollick, now serving as "special adviser" to Tony Blair's clean-living, Christian, wholesome government.

THERE has been a bitter response at ratings-challenged Radio One to the use of the Copyright Act by the radical, left of centre, we don't give a toss musos at Creation records.

Creation had agreed that loutish DJ Steven Lamaq would be the first to play tracks from the new Oasis album *Be Here Now*. This was only fair as BBC TV will devote 40 minutes of airtime to a blatant plug for the CD ahead of Thursday's release.

However, after Lamaq had played half-a-dozen of the tracks, Creation (and more to the point Sony Music Entertainment, which bankrolls the "indie" label) got heavy. The DJ had failed to talk enough over the beginning and end of each song, thus enabling people to make clear tape recordings.

Permission to play the rest of the album was therefore rescinded, despite anguished phone calls between BBC and Sony suits.

HACKWATCH SPECIAL

This Life

EVER watched an episode of the BBC "cult" series *This Life*? No? Well, join the 92 per cent of the population resistant to the charms of a bunch of twentysomething lawyers who live in a house together, take drugs and shag each other a lot. And yet looking at the newspapers earlier this month, the impressionable reader could be forgiven for assuming that the adventures of Milly, Miles, Egg, Anna and Ferdy were, well, of interest to more than the smallish audience (three to four million weekly) the BBC2 series, just concluded, picked up.

Coverage by well-placed media chums had been fairly consistent since the second series began a couple of months back. When it became known, a week or so before the final episode, that no one at the Beeb had bothered (or were pretending that they hadn't bothered) to commission a third, a hype-wagon of gargantuan dimensions moved swiftly over the horizon.

5 August. All is not lost, suggests the *Guardian*. "It is the news four million viewers have been waiting for." The BBC has "confirmed that script ideas for a new series had been commissioned": no final decision on the programme's future would be taken until these had been examined by the executive producer Tony Garnett. The *Daily Telegraph* warns that a third series might contain none of the original characters. According to a BBC source "a first version of the script for the series is almost complete and does not feature any of the characters who have made it a success". *The Times*, meanwhile, had a new slant: "avant-garde dramatist" Mark Ravenhill "has been asked to provide ideas to inject an even more risque element into the story of young lawyers sharing a house". Inevitably, the BBC is receiving a "deluge of calls" from worried fans.

7 August. The day of the final episode dawns. The situation is helpfully summed up by the *Independent*'s arts man, David Lister: *This Life* will leave its admirers on tenterhooks, "not knowing whether the ending of the series will be the final curtain for the saga of twentysomething life". Over in the *Guardian* women's pages, Hilary Burden is dissecting the character of sexy battleaxe Anna. Alas, it seems that "we all know that her bad behaviour hides a troubled past. As soon as we find out what lies at the root of it — a bit of history wouldn't go amiss — the better". Only then, Ms Burden briskly concludes, "will she really, really be a woman for the nineties". The *Standard*'s Geoffrey Phillips is worried for other reasons. Hooked on Anna "The Strumpet Queen of TV" (*What that? Ed*), he's terrified lest this work of genius should outlive its natural span. "*This Life* should die tonight," he movingly suggests. "And with it Anna."

8 August. The morning after. TV critics and columnists can talk of nothing else. "One of the finest contemporary drama series in ages" — *Daily Mirror* (yes, even the beetle-browed tabs are in on this); "How to begin? With a moment of silence? Or a sigh?" — *The Times*. "Packed with the things that made the series the great product it undoubtedly is" — *Mail*. "An outstanding drama series, worthy of all the plaudits it has received..." —*Express*. And the heavyweights are getting involved. "I am quite bereft," opined the *Telegraph*'s Janet Daley, before spinning out a good-sounding line on "If there is any ulterior message at all in *This Life*, it lies in the underpinning. For any British drama to be so utterly classless is, in itself, a moral theme." Still no decision on the third series, though.

10 August. Time for a little valedictory reflection on this artistic triumph. The *Independent on Sunday* interviews series creator Amy Jenkins, daughter of the late Peter Jenkins and step-daughter of *Inde* columnist Polly Toynbee. Jenkins is still mildly bewildered by it all. "At first I never thought the lives of twentysomethings hating work and f——-g up relationships would be interesting," she muses. In the *Sunday Times* A.A. Gill sagely notes that "A lot of the media coverage last week had the smell of good PR about it. When it does return, you'll probably be gagging for it." Other observers are trying to work out the nature of the series' appeal. A scene in which Milly is sick and Egg can only find a frying pan draws particular praise from the *Sindy*: "It was tacky and true and funny like when — in an earlier episode — Kira and Joe lost a condom during intercourse. It happens, but not often on telly — which is what marks out *This Life* as genuinely modern."

11 August. A lone dissenting voice is raised by Peter Hitchens in the *Express*. "The really nasty thing about the television drug opera *This Life*," he suggests, "is that nobody has bothered to protest about it. The media world queues up to praise its funky plot lines, its sexy actresses and its original camera angles..." However, the implications of such acclaim are deeply disturbing. "People believe such dramas tell the truth... the abnormal and repulsive are made to seem normal and acceptable. Every breach is opened. We shall never regain the lost innocence."

And on it goes. Once again, we have the diverting spectacle of a handful of London media types whipping themselves into a frenzy over something that is largely of interest to, er, London media types. And there's still no decision on the third series...

HE MAY be serving six years for rape, but Owen Oyston's business empire continues to expand despite the chairman's incarceration.

Before he was sent down, Oyston acquired the franchise for BCR, a Belfast-based radio station. In daddy's enforced absence, daughter Karen took over as managing director, jettisoned staff and increased audiences with a desperately routine golden oldies format.

Last month, the Oystons bought a second station, the Armagh-based 1521AM. Now they've picked up a third Ulster franchise, Tyrone's Townland Radio, to add to a sister English operation.

Oyston previously owned a chain of radio stations centred on Manchester before selling out to Emap: picking up three new licences in under a year despite being locked up suggests that the socialist millionaire intends to rebuild a media empire on his release.

Quite why the Radio Authority is co-operating with these manoeuvres is another matter.

JAMES BROWN, the former Top Yob of *Loaded*, is wreaking havoc in his new post as editor of posh men's mag *GQ*.

Dr David Devlin, *GQ*'s medical correspondent, unwisely penned a piece saying that doctors believe cocaine is bad for the sex life and that coke-heads frequently become impotent.

For some reason the nasally-challenged Brown swiftly dispensed with the good doc's services.

DOING THE ROUNDS

Dial 999 — and cross your fingers

"WE SPEND £400m a year on emergency ambulance services in England without being sure for the most part whether the service we provide is the best possible". So said NHS chief executive Alan Langlands at last month's Ambulance Service Association conference.

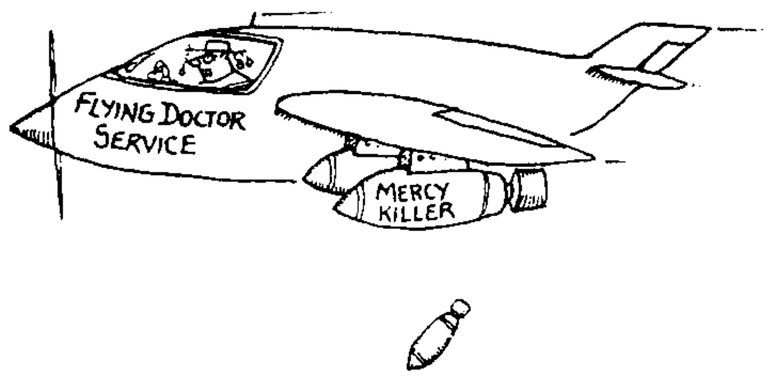
He also said, rather more predictably, that "nothing had been ruled out" in the Government's review of the service, but that there would be "no quick fix" (extra money) to speed up response times to 999 callers. It was up to trusts to persuade health authorities of "the potential for saving life by getting the right response to the right patient in the right time".

Alas neither Baroness Jay, the ambulance minister, nor health secretary Frank Dobson bothered to turn up to hear his speech. There was little to allay fears of another winter crisis in the NHS but plenty of talk of more accountability. As well as targets for critical response times (75 per cent of category A calls should be reached in eight minutes by 2001), clinical indicators such as survival rates of patients with cardiac arrests brought in by ambulance are likely to be published in future. The Audit Commission, too, will be looking into three areas: commissioning, patient transport and accident and emergency services. The Audit Commission's Geoff Rendle was not optimistic about what he might find. "Commissioning has often been dogged by a vicious circle of inexperienced purchaser staff, poor quality measurement, poor costing systems and inadequate contract specifications."

This was nothing new to those who work in the service, where early retirement due to stress, lifting injuries and assaults is well above the NHS average.

● David Trigg, chief executive of the South and Wast Wales Ambulance Trust, left after a critical auditors' report, but landed on his feet as managing director of QEF Career and Management Services Ltd, an Exeter-based company which organises seminars for, amongst others, ambulance managers. Trigg's stewardship of SAEWAT was a catalogue of financial mismanagement. The trust only passed its audits in the years after its creation in 1993 by deferring £680,000 in payments to the Welsh Office. By the end of 1996, the deficit was £898,000. In 1995, £125,000 was spent on a useless computer system. When the trust moved into new headquarters, the Welsh Office was informed the cost would be £2.4m, even though it had been calculated at £3.1m. The final bill came to £3.6m. Management consultants were offered a pound for every pound of savings identified up to a maximum of £356,000. The consultants identified £552,000 worth of savings and picked up the full payment. Alas, the auditors estimate only £182,000 was saved.

● Such failings are not isolated to Wales. After a Channel 4 *Dispatches* documentary last year, North Yorkshire Ambulance trust launched an independent inquiry into allegations of deliberately manipulated 999 response times, under-investment in staff training and equipment, and an autocratic management style. The latter allegation resurfaced in April when support services director Adrian Hessey was suspended for allegedly brandishing an (unloaded) air pistol in the trust's control room. He has now resigned, along with chief executive Michael King (after long term sick leave) and chair Murray Naylor. An industrial tribunal last November heard how staff "worked in a climate of fear and retribution." Frank Morrit, a former deputy chief constable in North Yorkshire and a trust non-executive director added "staff were too frightened to speak to me. I know for a fact that members of senior management were summoned by Mr King and told never to speak to me again".

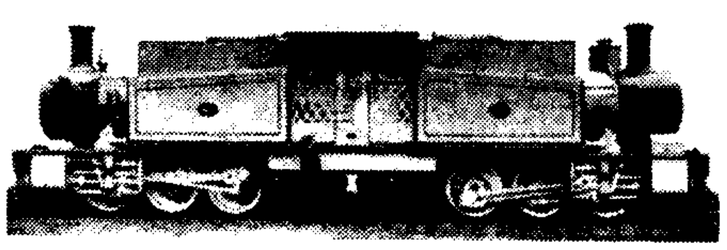


● East Anglian Ambulance Trust has also suffered three board level resignations recently. Chair Brian Plaxton went for "personal reasons" in February, after a bitter local press campaign highlighted intractable problems with a £1m fleet of 19 faulty Canadian Tristar ambulances.

● London Ambulance Service has fought hard to recover from the death of Nasima Begum two years ago after delays in responding to an emergency call but as John Batchelor, LAS's community relations officer, put it "if someone who is Bengali is trying to call for an ambulance, the control room staff could be tearing their hair out trying to understand. You can be on the call for 10 minutes just trying to get the address". Twenty per cent of London's inhabitants are from ethnic minorities and eight per cent of LAS operators speak more than one language. Getting the right operator is pot luck. This year Simon Magalu died after his lung was punctured by a sword. The LAS crew who attended had described it as "just a scratch". Did his skin colour or possible involvement in drugs influence the crew's behaviour? An inquiry is underway.

● Meanwhile, Kent Ambulance service is to replace five ambulance stations with "response bases" without explaining what they are. As chief executive John Burnside put it: "As we are seeking to enhance the service, we did not deem it necessary to put it out for public consultation." Accountability all round.

'M.D'



SIGNAL FAILURES

A Complete Connex

HANDING out Britain's rail operations to all and sundry seems to have provided the French with an opportunity to get even for the battle of Waterloo.

Parisian commuters might raise a wry smile from the comfort of their recently built double-deck trains if they knew how London sardines (*shurely "commuters"?* — Ed) are being treated by Compagnie Générale des Eaux, a large and acquisitive French utility. CGE was awarded two of England's biggest rail franchises with a huge dowry from UK taxpayers of Britain.

For the Connex SouthCentral franchise it was given a subsidy of £85.3m for the first year alone. In return, CGE is committed to doing next to nothing. The £10m it must spend over three years on improving trains and stations is a drop in the ocean for a company worth nearly £10bn. Connex SouthCentral still uses 600 old carriages of the design condemned as a safety risk following the Clapham Junction accident but is not required to replace a single one.

CGE's business plans for Connex SouthCentral and the adjacent Connex South Eastern appear to be based around saving money by running shorter trains than are required (see *Eye* 914). CGE refuses to be influenced by booming demand for travel into and out of London. Instead, it is using its "surplus" rolling stock to milk the market for travel to Gatwick Airport. It recently introduced a service between Rugby and Gatwick using trains that ought to be providing more capacity in Connex's own territory south of the capital.

Instead of taking Connex to task for its poor treatment of commuters (who are mostly a captive market for Connex), the quango responsible for franchising is helping it by massaging the overcrowding figures. These statistics are gathered by comparing the total numbers of passengers in the peak periods with train capacity — ie the number of train seats plus standing room. The ceiling for overcrowding is 4.5 per cent above overall capacity in any peak period.

In 1995 morning commuter trains from outside London on Network SouthCentral were overcrowded by 2.2 per cent above capacity; in 1996, once Connex was in charge, that figure shot up to 5.8 per cent. Although this is way above the maximum permitted overcrowding Connex SouthCentral has not been reprimanded because overcrowding of 3.2 per cent on local commuter trains within London brings its morning-peak average down to 4 per cent. British Rail used to keep the figures for each group of services separate but the new regime combines them to smooth out evidence of severe overcrowding. This is convenient for Connex, which consequently does not have to address the situation.

Commuters' only redress — or so they think — is to complain. Connex's reaction, however, is to tell them that overcrowding, despite the official statistics, is simply in the minds of the commuters. "There is often a perception of overcrowding. It is not a reality," Connex maintains.

Thousands of passengers appalled at Connex's Orwellian approach to customer relations are referring their complaints to the official watchdog, the London Regional Passengers' Committee. In June the Committee revealed an increase of 144 per cent in complaints relating to Connex SouthCentral in the first quarter of this year.

'Dr B. Ching'

Mr Jim Portus, chief executive of the South Western Fish Producer Organisation, said he was "gutted" by yesterday's High Court ruling

Financial Times

DOWN ON THE FARM

SIR Jerry Wiggin and his "Wigginettes", aka the pre-May House of Commons Agriculture Committee, may not have been stars of stage and screen but, between them, they made a significant contribution to the debate on agriculture for nearly a decade. Not least of their "scalps" were their inquiries on salmonella and eggs, BSE and, latterly, pesticides.

But under "new" Labour, even such experts as former member Christopher Gill, farmer and butcher, pale into insignificance compared with the new committee. Its new stars pack in all the agricultural expertise the Party can muster. Which is why its members include three journalists, a publisher, a former public relations consultant, a former special needs teacher, a solicitor and a former IT sales director.

Watched over by this well-qualified and expert team, farmers and consumers alike should be thanking the Lord that they are in such safe hands. So powerful is this "watchdog" that Jack "the Lad" Cunningham, Agriculture Minister, must be quaking in his boots.

'New Muckspreader'

LUVVIES

Imagination is my beginning and end. The words and images I find there have nothing to communicate in form, or sell. They rise or fall from an unknown source and mock all explanation. I believe without my actor's passport to that mediating Globe I would surely be mad or dead.

MARK RYLANCE
(Artistic Director, Globe Theatre)
Globe programme

Submitted by Jon Sullivan.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Rotten Boroughs

Sex and Drugs Special

1 THE unhappy saga of Tooting Bec Gardens hostel for the homeless rumbles on (*Eyes passim*). Three senior housing officials from Lambeth faced gross misconduct charges for letting the hostel become a centre for prostitution and crack dealing, as opposed to a place where the homeless could find refuge.

Staff members Tooley Wanogho and Keith Careswell have been sacked for their part in the scandal. Their boss, David Ward, has fared better: he is now Regional Care and Support Housing Manager for the Metropolitan Housing Trust (MHT).

Members of the hung council were recently baffled when they received a letter from Housing Director, John Broomfield, telling them that although Ward's disciplinary action had already started he had decided to accept Ward's resignation with "immediate effect". Broomfield reassured sceptical councillors that potential employers would be told of Ward's past. But Ward had already started with the MHT before councillors received Broomfield's letter. He is not the first senior Lambeth housing official to have departed under a cloud only to turn up at the MHT. Links between the two organisations have been forged over the years; for example a sheltered scheme for the elderly in Streatham, Coventry Hall, is run by the MHT but funded by Lambeth.

Whether MHT will now put in a bid to run all Lambeth's sheltered accommodation, soon to go out to tender, remains to be seen. Certainly Ward's inside knowledge will be helpful.

2 AN UNDISCOVERED species of council worker has evolved in the out-of-control borough of Hackney — the drug-dealing social worker.

A former employee, Vernon Williams, has admitted smuggling dope into Feltham young offenders prison for a 15-year-old boy who had been in the council's "care". Williams would see his charge on visitors days, go into the toilet adjoining the visitors room, and hide the dope behind the bog-roll. The boy then sold his stash to other inmates. Just to prove that one crime leads to another, the inmate's sister forged her brother's signature on benefit cheques which were cashed to buy jewellery that was later pawned to buy drugs.

When the boy's parents found out and complained to the council, Williams's bosses at the town hall suggested that the family was trying to smear Williams by using a racial stereotype — black man deals in drugs.

Williams then admitted that he smuggled drugs. Hackney social services bosses, with their usual inability to make a sensible decision, failed to refer the allegations to Inspector Knacker, and refused to sack him. He has now resigned.

Bent

THE ruling Labour group on Bent's hung council is bending over backwards to secure the Lib-Dems' votes by pouring money into the party's pet schemes.

Already this summer Bent council has spent £575,000 on 17 small-scale road safety schemes proposed by the Lib-Dems: traffic calming, closed-circuit TV, controlled parking, speed cameras, traffic islands, bollards and barriers. Meanwhile urgent schemes at accident black spots in Dollis Hill and Neasden have somehow not materialised. Interestingly, 11 of the 17 schemes are in Lib-Dem-held wards, even though the Libs have only five councillors out of 66.

Junkets of the Week

● CONTROVERSIAL plans by the Casey Group to fill in a large hole north-east of Oldham and build a golf course on it are currently on the agenda in Oldham town hall. Locals campaigning against the scheme were shocked when it emerged that council leader John Battye had accepted the company's "corporate hospitality" at the Old Trafford Test Match. Battye was picked up by car and watched the game in the company of two fellow Labour councillors and a council official. When criticised, he had a novel defence. There was nothing unusual in his action, he said — he had accepted 50 similar cases of hospitality in the past year!

● THE budget-conscious Tories in charge of Kent County Council are anxious to reduce the council's £600m debt. Meanwhile two Tory councillors flew Club Class to Philadelphia for a meeting with a development company. Extra cost to the local council tax payer of flying in such style? £2,000.

Argyll

FANCY a low-cost, nice wee house in up-market Helensburgh offering the most picturesque views in Scotland?

This is the gift package offered by Argyll & Bute council to peace protestors at Faslane Peace Camp. The caveat, of course, is that the caravan/hut/tree dwellers must fold up their tents, stop protesting and move into a local council house.

As many as 1000 locals, however, could join the campers in their fight to stay where they are — because that's the number already on the waiting list for a house with a view.

Con of the Week

SLOUGH'S Labour-controlled council has covered up details of how it has been ripped off for more than £3m in housing benefits by rogue landlords. The scam was simple: three landlords applied to the council for housing benefit for around 500 local unemployed residents using false names (many of them were illegal immigrants) and false addresses (many of the houses didn't exist). Each resident picked up some £50 per week, from which the landlords took their cut. Funnily enough, the council officer paid £14,000 a year to weed out illicit claims was living in a palatial country home and driving a BMW. He has now been sacked.

Pseuds Corner

Sometimes it isn't just about decorating. Sometimes it's about a perfect moment, like the one pictured on our cover. The way the sun slants in the window towards the end of the day and falls across a pillow. The way a ruffle around the legs of a chaise looks generous and familiar and comforting. The way the chaise simply turns its back to the room because what you really want to do there is sink into its cushions, feel the warmth of the sun across your face, gaze over the dunes and out to the ocean, then drift away. Some people prefer mountains, some the desert; some are water people. I am, by nature and upbringing, a water person. I'm convinced there's a gene for seaside dwellers...

Editorial from House and Garden (USA)

She [Isabella Blow] arrived at the Givenchy show earlier this month in a PVC dress, a bird on her head, and dragging a heavy oily chain behind her — an accessory designed by Amanda Mansell, a Royal College of Art student, to symbolise the burden a woman carries through her life. Later that day, Blow dragged the same chain through Karl Lagerfeld's sumptuous Paris home.

Sunday Times Magazine

Shallow Water is an exploration into how and why we wash ourselves, and our relationship to water and cleaning. Why is it that we wash ourselves on the outside when we are trying to spiritually cleanse the inside? The piece looks at the paradox that we should use water to wash away dirt, grease, shame, guilt, hurt, deception and hate and yet view it as a place of refuge and decadence, somewhere that is shared with a lover, or a luxurious ritual every Sunday night.

Site Gallery, Sheffield

I slept in Gianni Versace's bed. Of course, he wasn't in it at the time, but I couldn't help feeling that I was soaking up some of his aura... There was a lot of nervous energy around Gianni's bed, and I must say I never slept very well in it. I kept wanting to leap out of the bed and do things: write poetry, smell the gardenias and jasmine that surrounded the house, gaze out my window at the magnificent lake and press my face into the cool marble of any number of naked-men statues that filled his bedrooms.

MADONNA
Time Magazine

The plot of *Lost Highway* binds time's arrow into time's loop, forcing Euclidian space into Einsteinian curves where events lapse and pulse at different rates and everything might return eternally.

MARINA WARNER
Sight & Sound

From the bleak modernism of James Kelman's novels to the acidic fantasies of Irvine Welsh, the word fuck — and its ovular equivalent, cunt — are used not simply to reflect the cadences of working-class life, but to mark out the power of a language that is inarticulate yet profound.

STUART COSGROVE
Guardian

CONTRIBUTORS: Terry Tinthoff-Jones, Esther Kaposi, Stuart J. Harris, J. Limb, D. Ní Loingsigh, Tony Brooks.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Royal standard

Sir,

So, Diana has apparently fallen in love with a not-particularly-handsome fellow with a reputation as a bit of a ladies' man who is bankrolled in a life of continuous leisure by a long-suffering mega-rich parent.

Plus ça change — as they say in St Tropez!

Yours,
MIKE CRAPPER,
London SW18.

Gospel truth

Sir,

Re: St Albion Parish News (EYE *930). I don't know if the biblical references are meant to be appropriate or are picked at random, but in this issue it says: "I think a little humility from [Hattersley, Benn and Castle] wouldn't come amiss (John 8.23), don't you!" and John 8.23 says: "And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world".*

Well, it made me laugh anyway.

PAUL OLDHAM,
Via e-mail.

Affair cop

Sir,

I'm afraid that your World of Hype about my husband, Adrian Mourby, quoted words that were not written by me.

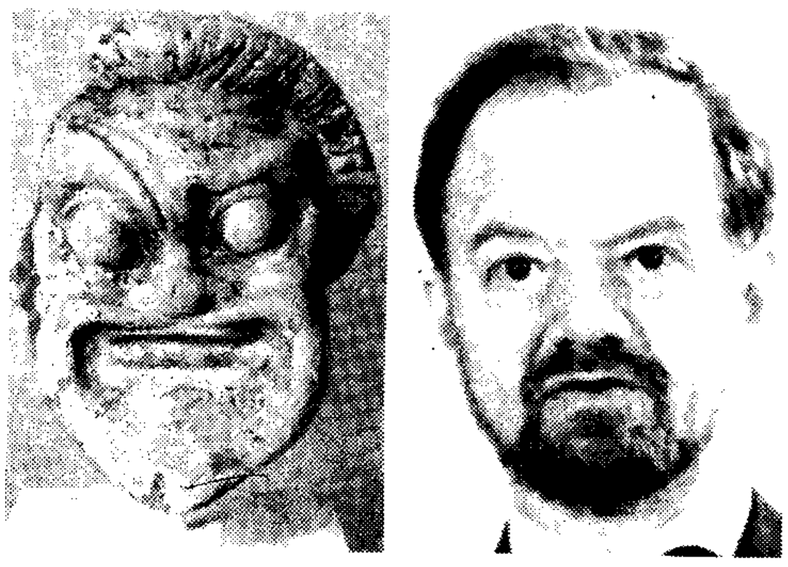
You refer to a recent article of mine which appeared in the DAILY TELEGRAPH *and quote the words "their marriage has survived seventeen years despite his numerous affairs".*

This phrase "his numerous affairs" was, in fact, inserted into my piece by an editor at the TELEGRAPH. *When I was shown proofs I asked for it to be removed on the grounds that it was untrue. I didn't want my article to proclaim any untruths and neither did Adrian.*

I have already written to the TELEGRAPH*'s editor, Charles Moore, requesting his assurance that this inaccurate information will not be repeated.*

Yours,
KATHARINE NICHOLAS,
Llandaff, Cardiff.

Lookalike



Cook **Mask**

Sir,

New Labour New Comedy?

Whilst holidaying in Sicily I recently came across the Greek "Masks of New Comedy". The Hegemón Therápon aka "The leading slave" bears a striking resemblance to a certain Foreign Secretary.

Are they perchance related? I think we should be told.

Regards,
D. DODD,
London W5.

Distant Cousins

Sir,

Re: Blairzone, EYE *930. When you next see that fab Mr Blair, please point out to him that David Cousins didn't actually write "Part of the Union". That honour went to Richard Hudson and John Ford, who were also in The Strawbs at the time. Or so the record sleeve says.*

Incidentally, is he really the "late" great David Cousins? Last time I heard, he was working in local radio in Devon. Still, I can see the connection...

Perhaps if Mr Cousins reads this, he'll kindly contact you. Please publish his letter if so, so I can be reassured of his greatness but not his lateness.

Best wishes,
ROBIN HILL,
Totterdown, Bristol.

"Say goodbye to your friends and come in now, Malcolm — tea's ready"

Over exposure

Sir,

I have always been a keen reader of PRIVATE EYE. *Thus can only express my heartfelt thanks regarding your wonderful tribute. I noticed at a glance that considerable time and effort have been spent on this work and would like to offer my warmest congratulations. As I'm sure you're aware I have considerable contacts in the world of popular music and light entertainment and would be delighted to offer my assistance in launching the career of such an obviously talented newcomer. I must, however, be honest. My youth, my height (6'4"), curly dark hair and moody good looks have made a considerable contribution to my meteoric media exposure. So I wait with fingers crossed in the hope that the author of this fine poetry is neither short, bald, ugly or old.*

Yours faithfully,
MURRAY LACHLAN YOUNG,
London NW6.

Strip tease

Sir,

Your description of my old Manchester friend Phil Woolas MP as a past supporter of Troops Out is sloppy and inaccurate journalism. To call him a Yorkshire accented Leeds United supporter is criminally negligent. I recall one particular incident involving the man known then as Worsthorne's Steve Coppell. Proudly leading a Sunday morning kickabout in his Man Utd top, the future MP commented to his marker, a colossus from Halifax, that the teams had been selected on the basis of their War of the Roses allegiance, adding "and we all know who won that". Several bonecrunching tackles later, the Halifax tyro picked up the aspirant politician: "Won it did you?... It hasn't bloody finished yet!"

Yours sincerely,
JOHN MANN,
Baldock, Herts.

Hot favourite

Sir,

Re: Power Point (Letters, EYE *930). 55 per cent thermal efficiency is indeed very high, unbelievably high for a Gas Turbine Power Plant. But the point is that it is still a waste of Natural Gas to use it to generate electricity. Today, a good boiler will convert 85% of your gas into heat.*

Yours faithfully,
MR K. BALL,
Huddersfield.

Law and disorder

Sir,

Alec Cawley ("Power Point", Letters 8 August) claims that the thermal efficiency of a power station is limited to around 50% by the laws of physics. Actually the limitation is imposed by the laws of politics. Certainly, only half the heat (burning coal, say) can be turned into work (electricity). But if you go for 25% electricity, and pipe the remaining heat somewhere useful for space heating, you can get around 80% altogether from the initial heat input. But that's merely being careful with resources, and doesn't make big money for fat cats, so it's no use in the UK.

They do Combined Heat and Power, or Cogeneration, in politically correct US cities and drippy egalitarian countries like Denmark. Here we use one premium fuel — north sea gas — to make another premium fuel — electricity — and throw away half of its calorific value. This waste does wonders for top salaries and dividends.

Incidentally, Battersea power station, in addition to electricity, used to provide district heating for Westminster flats across the river. So they decommissioned it and turned it into a Thatcherist theme-park wasteland.

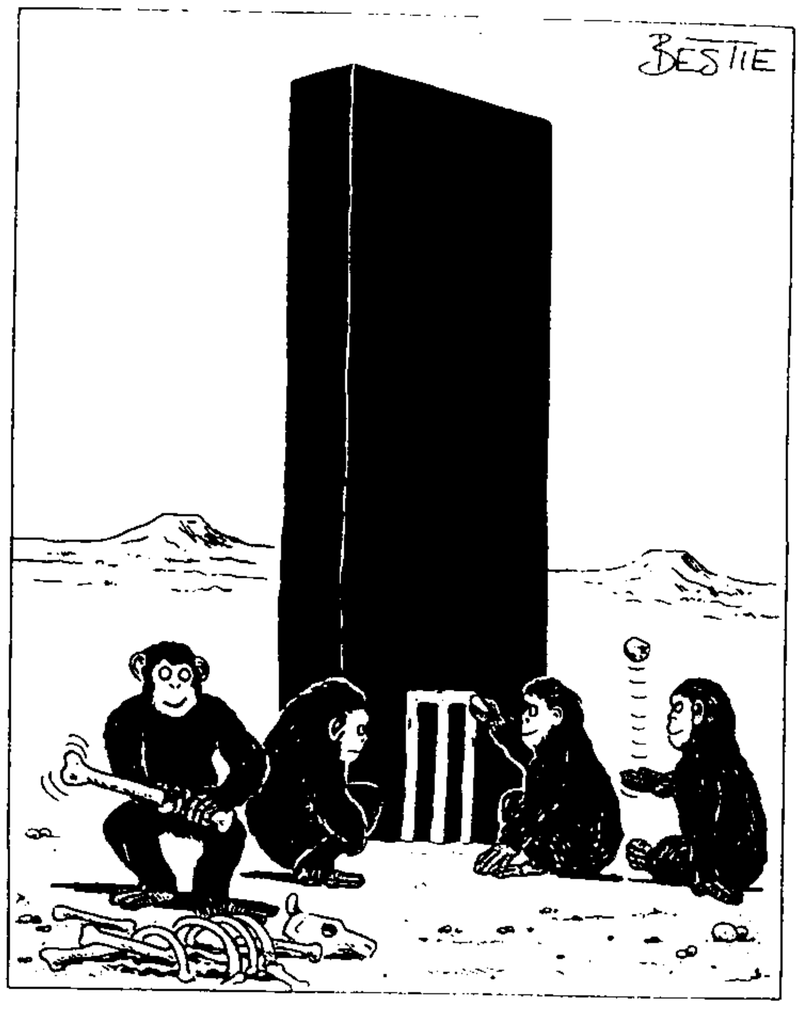
Yours sincerely,
ROBIN OAKLEY-HILL,
Sevenoaks, Kent.

Work shy

Sir,

The Hazelbottom playing fields — more often just called "the Zeneca" — are to the best of my knowledge in Crumpsall, rather than Blackley. By a remarkable coincidence, Richard Leese represents the Crumpsall ward on the city council! Could it be that he is too modest to share the good news of his successful work on behalf of our multinational neighbour with his electors?

Yours in astonished admiration,
J. KENNY,
Via e-mail.



Man was suddenly on the way to becoming civilised

I-SPY *Cornwall*

Submitted by Toby Horwood. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Religious offering

Sir,

Re: Isaiah Chapter 6 Verse 11. I hate to spoil Piloti's fun at the expense of the poor old Anglican Church in Wales (Christ Church, Caernarfon), but facts do occasionally get in the way of a "good story".

1. We have been patiently waiting since 1991 for a firm offer from Canolfan Caernarfon Cyf (C.C.C.).

2. C.C.C. said that it was "helpless to respond" if a comparable or better offer was received.

3. A better offer was received, contrary to your assertion. C.C.C. was advised of the other interest.

4. The Representative Body publishes its accounts annually.

5. The redundant church has been on the market through local agents and advertised for 10 years.

6. Any developer, C.C.C. included, needs to obtain Listed Building Consent for the conversion.

7. The church is Grade II but would not be regarded as "outstanding" and therefore could not be adopted by the new Redundant Churches Fund.

Yours faithfully,
C.D. SAMUEL FRICS Dip Bldg Cons,
The Representative Body of the Church in Wales.

Lookalike

Solovyov

Hague

Sir,

Has anyone noticed the likeness between Anatoly Solovyov, the man picked to rescue what remains of the battered, antiquated and rudderless space station, and William Hague, the man picked to rescue what remains of the Conservative Party? Or is it a Mir coincidence?

Regards,
PETER HUGHES (DR),
London E17.

Share offer

Sir,

In EYE *930, Street of Shame, you mention the slump in the share price of Pearson, parent company of the* FINANCIAL TIMES. *Lo and behold, that very week Pearson's shares put on 11½p, a rise of 17% on the week. Is the Curse of Gnome no more? Is it now a Blessing? Whatever, can you do something about Lonrho, say 30p per share?*

Yours in appreciation (geddit?),
GEORGE ELLIOTT,
Horsham, W. Sussex.

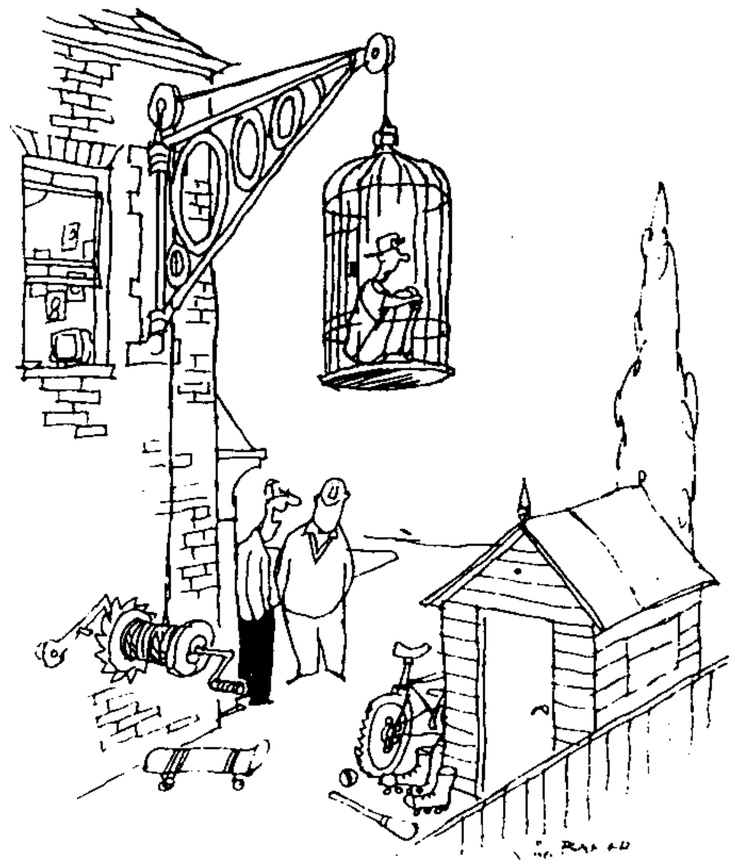
Approved school

Sir,

*I was surprised to learn (*EYE *930) that William Dalrymple-Hamilton is not an Old Etonian. What on earth is he then? Presumably an Old Harrovian.*

I think we should be told.

Yours etc,
SIR JULIUS GRIPP,
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.



"It gets him out of the house but keeps him off the streets"

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"We have more non-English players in our league than any other country in the world."
GORDON TAYLOR, Radio 5 Live
(Stephen Lingard)

"I have a claustrophobia for heights."
LADY ELIZABETH 'KANGA' DALE, 60 Minutes, Australia
(Robert Biggs)

"They [the England cricket team] are not bad players; they just play badly."
GEOFF BOYCOTT, BBC
(Peter Barrett)

Richard Orford: *Where are you calling from?*

Caller: *Southampton.*

Orford: *Southampton! Just down the road from here in Cowes on the Isle of Wight...*

The Bigger Breakfast, Channel 4
(John Burton)

Peter Mandelson: *We've just invested £2.3 billion in schools.*

Caller: *What's that in real terms?*

Mandelson: *In real terms, it's £2.3 billion.*

Radio 5 Live
(Paddy Griffith)

Postcard from **Indonesia**

From Our Own Correspondent

WHAT has happened to Nick Oliver, the former managing director of PSI, or Procurement Services International, one of Britain's main arms exporters?

At the Salisbury headquarters of Greys, PSI's parent company, the *Eye* was told: "Mr Oliver no longer works for the company." Where had he gone to? "No one here knows," was the mysterious reply.

Could Mr Oliver's sudden and unheralded departure have anything to do with his startling performance on Granada's *World in Action* on 11 June? Some weeks before the general election, Granada reporters disguised as potential arms salesmen approached PSI about potential business in Indonesia. Nick Oliver welcomed them with open arms and gushed away at length about the lucrative arms market provided by the Indonesian dictatorship. "We regularly ship vehicles into Indonesia without tax," he boasted. "They are for the personal use of senior people."

Oliver went on to describe his regular visits to East Timor, which is under illegal occupation by Indonesian armed forces, and where half a million inhabitants have been murdered. He said he'd been on "police and military patrols there" and added: "The difference between Northern Ireland and East Timor is that in East Timor they kill people in blocks of 200, and in Northern Ireland they do one or two a day."

He said that his firm had got export licenses for water cannon to Indonesia after an approach to the then Prime Minister John Major and the Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind (Rifkind denied any contact with Oliver — Major refused to comment). Oliver then took his "customers" round his works pointing out some of the guns and water cannon which were due for export to Indonesia. He was quite confident that PSI would be able to continue with these exports if a Labour government was elected. He said that he and his colleagues had had "detailed discussions" with the Labour front bench, including Tony Blair.

"Mr Blair's view," he declared, "is that the type of equipment that the Conservatives have given export licenses to would present no difficulty for the Labour government." Blair's office replied that it was "vacuous in the extreme" to suggest that he would have discussed export licenses when in Opposition.

When the *World in Action* programme went out, Robin Cook had recently announced that British foreign policy, including arms exports, would be governed by concerns for human rights. Most people who saw the programme probably dismissed Mr Oliver as a bullshitter. Now, however, the Labour government is granting licenses for all arms exports to Indonesia licensed by the Tory government. Mr Oliver may have been telling the truth. What a pity he's no longer in his job, and so can't answer any questions.

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

I'M GLAD YOU TOLD ME TO GO AND TALK TO MY DEADLY ENEMY.
CONFLICT RESOLUTION
DID YOU SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVE YOUR CONFLICT?
YES. I KILLED THE BASTARD.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● *"I was blowing my nose yesterday morning when I felt something peculiar," Goeran Rudolfsson told reporters in Stockholm. "At first, I thought it was a dried bogey, so I tried to pull it out, but it just kept coming. After a few inches, I realised it was a piece of cloth, so I kept pulling, and eventually all thirty-one inches came out. My wife thought I was doing a magic trick and was laughing uncontrollably throughout. I wasn't laughing though. I had an operation for a brain tumour in June, and ever since I'd been bothered by congestion in my head and a stuffed-up nose. This must have been the cause.*

"Even so, I won't sue the hospital. I've been breathing much more easily ever since I pulled it out. I'm delighted, so why should I sue?" (Boston Globe, 16/7/97. Spotter: Professor Stephen Reucroft)

● **"When Wanayama told us that he wanted to suffer the way Jesus did," Godfrey Olukya told reporters in Lubango Village, Bukooli, "we didn't believe him at first. But when he bought some timber from the village carpenter to make a cross, and some six-inch nails for the crucifixion, we started to take him seriously.**

"At about lunchtime on Good Friday, he told his fellow Christians he was ready. He asked them to sound a drum, so that all the villagers could come and witness his heroic deed. For added authenticity he'd even got a sponge, a bottle of vinegar, and a crown of thorns made out of crepe paper and barbed wire. Volunteers helped him erect the cross, and he stood by it with his arms stretched out, just like Jesus. He beckoned to one of the Christians, who had a hammer and the nails, and asked him to do the necessary. The Christian stepped forward, placed a nail in Wanayama's palm, and hit hard with the hammer. Wanayama screamed out some obscenities, pulled the nail out of his hand, and then started hitting the man who was nailing him with a stick.

"Everyone began insulting him, and we tried to hold him down so we could crucify him like he'd promised. The mayor said that if he didn't go through with the nailing, he'd be arrested for fooling the village, but Wanayama slipped free and ran away. He wasn't seen again until Monday. He was spotted in a bar drinking Chairman's beer, and showing everyone his hand wound and claiming that he'd risen again on the third day. He is not a good Christian." *(New Vision [Uganda], 10/5/97. Spotter: Gavin MacMillan)*

—●—

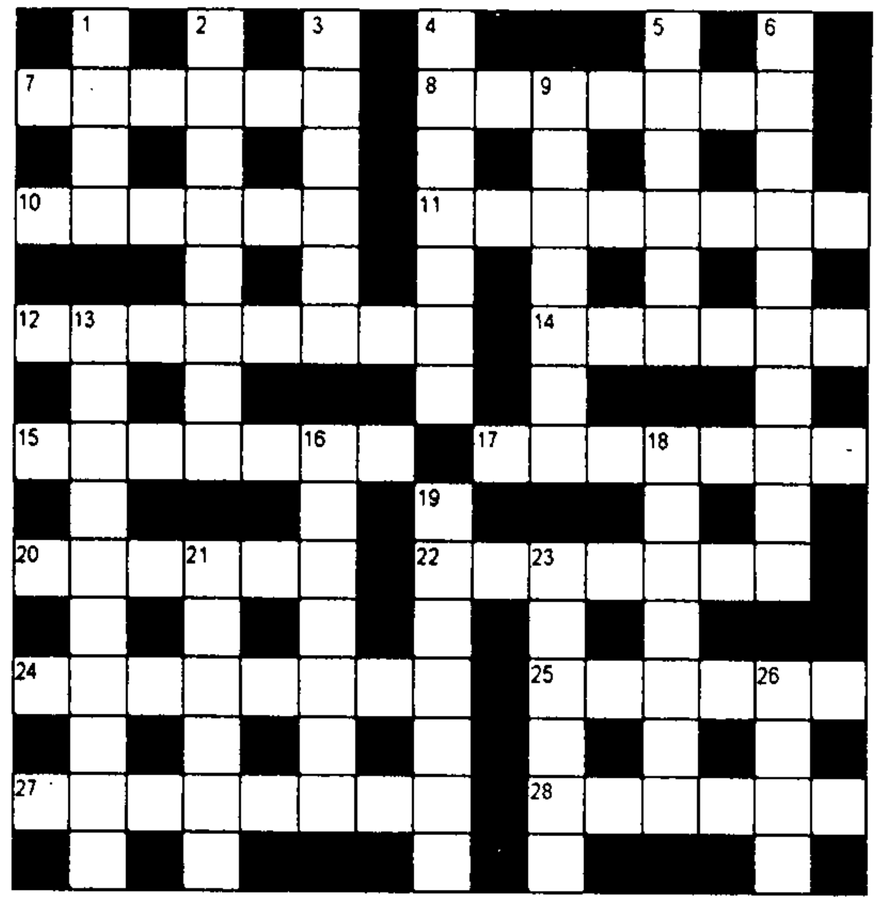
● "The first I knew about it was when the floor started to shake" Anthony Catania told reporters at his riverside restaurant in Seattle. "We thought it was an earthquake and ran outside. But then I saw a group of hard hats staring into a hole and muttering that they'd lost their mole, and I realised what had happened.

"Sewer-diggers have been tearing up the street in front of the restaurant for weeks, using a mole. That's a tunnel-digging robot that can chew through hundreds of feet of soil a day. They pre-program it to tell it which direction to go. This time they misprogrammed it, and instead of tunnelling along the street, it dug a 700-foot hole right beneath the restaurant floor. When I told them what had happened, they shrugged and said they couldn't stop it, because they'd bought the cheap version without any remote control. So we went along to the river and waited until it came out there. Now we'll have to close the restaurant for a month, while they fill the hole in with concrete." *(New York Times Magazine, 1/6/97. Spotter: Darren Ingram)*

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

EYE CROSSWORD 86

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

7 Giving head in university, one to one — the ideal place! (6)
8 They persuaded people to talk of postage fiddle (7)
10 One must have vice, yes? (6)
11 Hiding a sexual indulgence? (8)
12 Whip's inside effing exposing a member (8)
14 Marry Tory leader? Possibly, being a willing sufferer! (6)
15/5/25 BMWs are a real pillock's indulgence, but a princely ride (7,6,6)
17 Tony's capital requires backing of arsehole, one who's been dubbed a high flier (7)
20 Nice place according to agents involved in Grade's resignation (3,3)
22 Only 50% Left, Blair's reshaping of the old party (7)
24 Amin's obit: pointless, pathetic object (8)
25 (see 15)
27 A big knob gives you energy, men — nice! (8)
28 Toady gets to go round track (6)

DOWN

1 Horny beast, this would-be profiteer (4)
2 Such amusement following your going downhill? (5-3)
3 The pacifist element of Goring and Himmler (6)
4 Trollope novel that would have been best left on the back burner? (3,4)
5 (see 15)
6 Ken's old haunt has to reckon with youth lobby (6,4)
9 To make a stir, criticise motorway opened by Brenda (7)
13 Possibly make mole get journalist on the inside to secure secret information (6,4)
16 Out of Ben and Lisa, one who'd pick Lisa? (7)
18 Shag before getting out of bed and make a mess of it (5,2)
19 Tosser has drink before TV programme (7)
21 Brenda does good in leather straps (6)
23 Stupid talk from Blair — no aura — in minor surroundings (6)
26 School provides drug (speed) (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 29.08.97. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

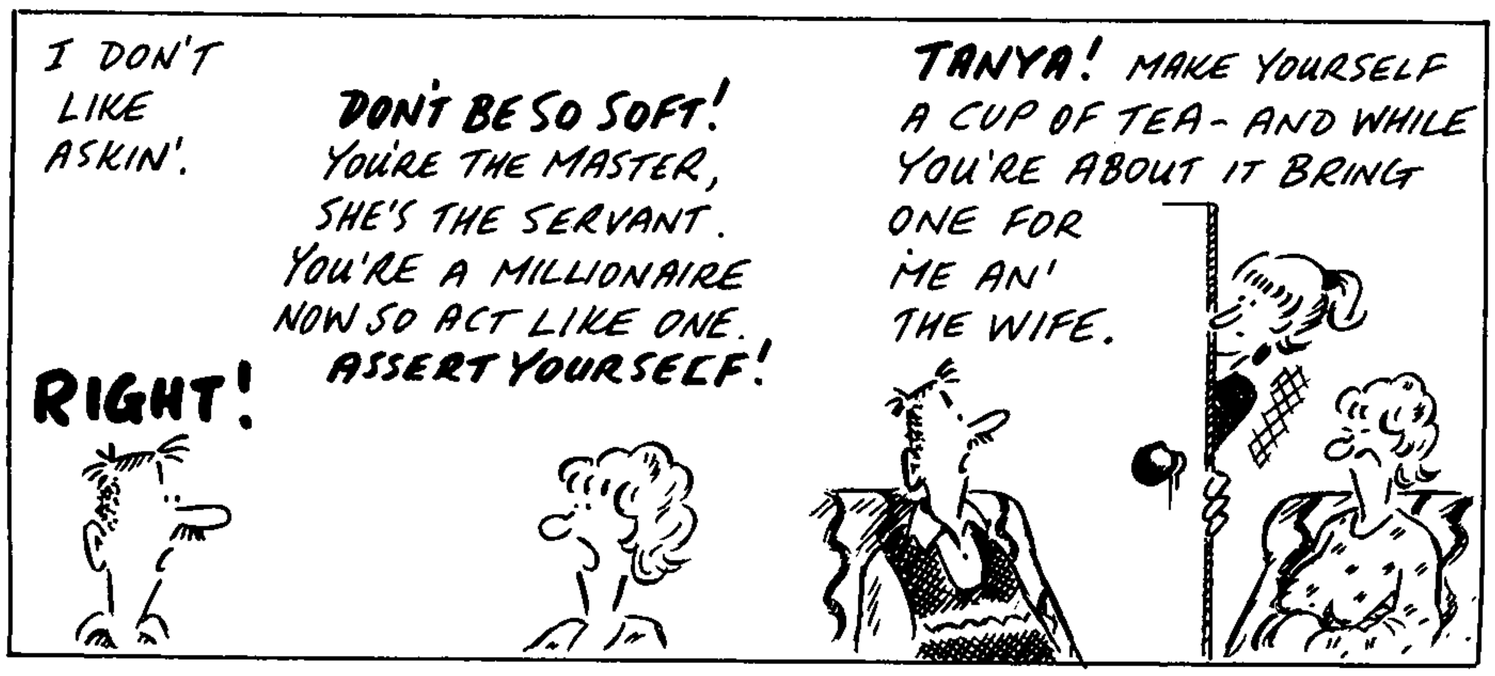
Solution to Crossword No. 85

Winner: LINDA RATCLIFFE

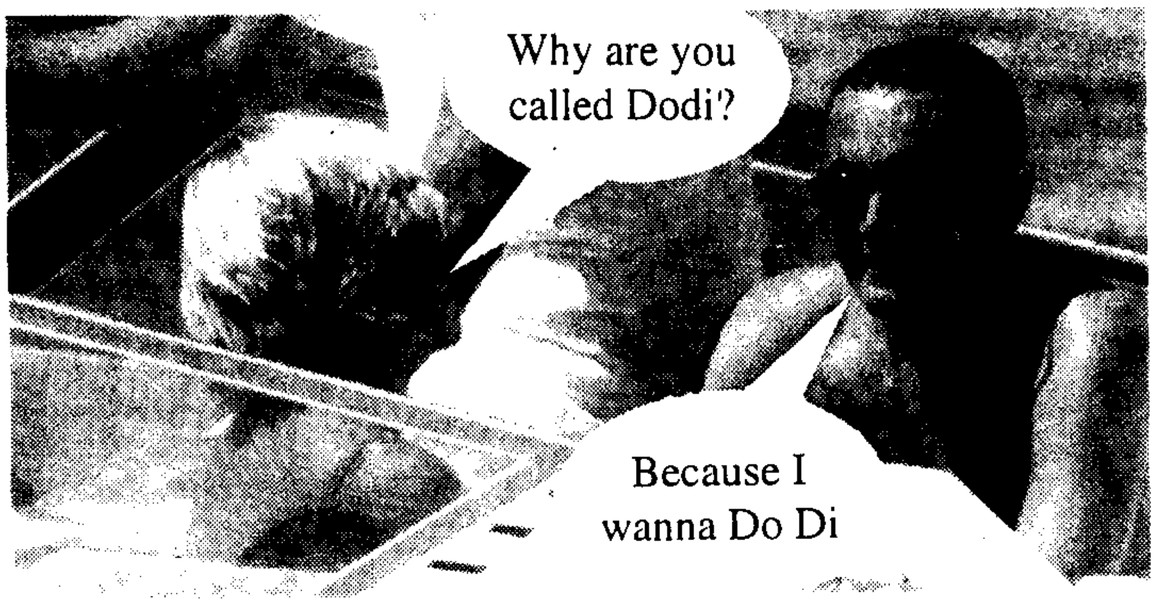
ACROSS: 7 (see 12) 9 Arms to Iraq 10 Kitsch 11 Armalite 12/7 Down on the Farm 13 Smack 15 Heckler 17 Justice 20 Droop 22 Sperm bank 25 Subjects 26 Goitre 27 Flak jacket 28 NASA.

DOWN: 1 Radio One 2 (see 23) 3 Empathy 4 Stump 5 Diplomat 6 Baltic 8 Mason 14 Surrogate 16 Knob joke 18 Congress 19 Spassky 21 Rouble 23/2 Brian Mawhinney 24 Scram

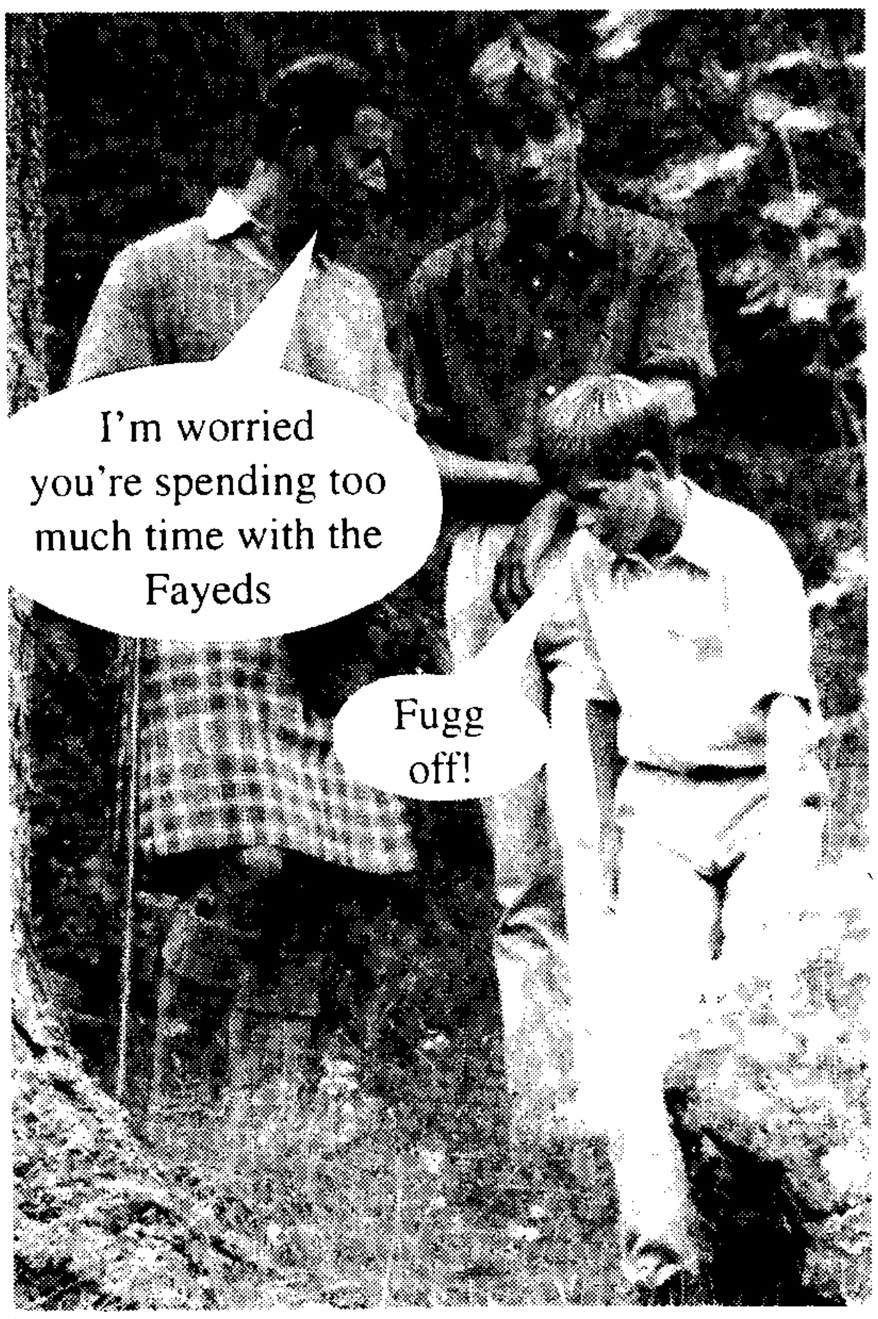
The Lottery Winners TURNER


I DON'T LIKE ASKIN'.
DON'T BE SO SOFT! YOU'RE THE MASTER, SHE'S THE SERVANT. YOU'RE A MILLIONAIRE NOW SO ACT LIKE ONE. ASSERT YOURSELF!
RIGHT!
TANYA! MAKE YOURSELF A CUP OF TEA - AND WHILE YOU'RE ABOUT IT BRING ONE FOR ME AN' THE WIFE.

Summer Holiday Picture Special



★ San Tropez



☆ Balmoral

★ Los Angeles

TV HIGHLIGHTS

'The Partition of Elvis' — 50 Years On

A celebration to mark the anniversary of Elvis's Independence

7.00pm "Elvis", directed by Richard Attenborough. Includes mammoth reconstruction of Elvis Funeral using millions of Indian extras, and tells of the Mahatma's extraordinary life in a series of hit songs such as "Heartbreak Patel", "Love Me Nehru" and "Blue Suede Dhotis (Don't Step On My)"

9.00pm "Gandhi Live at Vegas". Two-hour concert by the great man himself backed by the Raj Quartet in which he sings his greatest ballads including "Indian Trilogy", "Crying In The Temple" and *(That's enough. Ed.)*

Elvis Lookalike struts his stuff.
ITV 11.00 pm

University Places Available

(Continued from Page One)
Meccano Engineering BSC, University of Brent Cross (formerly IKEA Polytechnic); **UFO Technology Management BSc**, University of Shetland (formerly Rockall Polytechnic); **Elvis Memorabilia Studies HND**, The Worsthorne University (formerly Redditch Polytechnic); **Dishwasher Design BA (Hons)**, Thameslink University (formerly the 7.32am to Penge); **Joint Course Teletubbies and Polynesian Book Binding MSc**, Jilly Cooper's University (formerly Rutland Polytechnic); *(That's enough places. Ed.)*

VIDEO 'Surly Valentine'

SAD story of bored housewife and mother who goes on holiday and finds summer romance in the Mediterranean with a swarthy gigolo. It all turns sour when Surly discovers that Dodi is a smooth-talking Casanova who spins the same line to all the Princesses who come on his yacht.

CAST IN FULL

Surly Valentine .... PRINCESS DIANA
Dodi Fayed ..... TOM CONTI
Mohamed Fayed .... DANNY DE VITO

● **Eye rating: Hilarious**

"So, if anybody out there has any information that might help the police find the killer of poor Cock Robin..."

McHANSARD
What you will see

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

3pm. 1st Reading of the Bill to Outlaw the Propagation of Defamatory Rumour Amongst Parliamentarians.

Angus McGrotty (Gorbals, Lab): I would just like to point out that my honourable friend, the member for Shallowgrave is a poof! *(Cries of "Shame on ye!", "Gang awae!" and "We all thought so")*

Rhona McNasty (Trainspotting, Lab): I wonder how much money my honourable friend was paid by the drug barons of Dundee to say that! *(Cries of "Shame on ye!", "Gang awae!" and "Can we have some money too?")*

The Speaker (Mrs McBoothroyd): Order, order, I must ask honourable members to remember that the eyes of the world will be judging us by our actions here today. *(Cries of "Shaddup, ya old slag!")*

Archie McSleazy (Meldrew, Lab): May I just bring to the house's notice the fact that one cannot go into a toilet in the parliament building without being given AIDS by some drunken, sexually degenerate wife-beater. I should like to know how much money these honourable members are prepared to pay me to keep quiet in future debates.

The Speaker (Mrs McPhone-Booth): I have an important announcement to make. The members bar is now open. *(House empties to cheers and cries of "Let me through, I'm a Scottish MP")*

It is thought Raj Mohammed Poselay was beaten to death, possibly during a family fun day in the park.

Wolverhampton Express & Star

04.00 ROBIN COOK'S FORMULA FOR DEATH
(1995, 8, 90 Mins) {Teletext p888} A young medical researcher digs closer to the cause of a fatal virus in this medical thriller. ***Stars: Nicollette Sheridan, William Devane. Dir. Armand Mastroianni***

Satellite Times

EXCLUSIVE PHOTO

THE most amazing picture ever taken is today proudly printed by The Mirror. And it is entirely genuine.

It shows the glamorous playboy editor, Piers Moron, with the new love of his life the beautiful press baron David Montgomery.

We can see from their body language that they are quite clearly in love and the tell-tale signs of physical affection announce to the world that this time it's for real.

Piers is kissing his reputation and his career goodbye.

The Mirror is proud to bring to its readers this tender and touched-up *(surely 'touching'? Ed.)* photograph.

© The Moron.

Harry Enfield's **Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath** **19. Mr Superior**

"I'm not even interested in hearing 'Be Here, Now' 'Definitely Maybe' was their consummate work 'What's the Story, Morning Glory?' was drivel they should have quit while they were ahead... no the film's terrible compared to the book Hornby should have stopped whilst he was ahead I didn't bother to read 'High Fidelity' I could tell it was going to be awful... everything he's written after 'Dead Babies' has been rubbish... he was good in 'Mean Streets' but 'Taxi Driver' proved he was a one-off wonder... they obviously blew all their ideas in the first series of The Fast Show... I stopped reading Viz after issue four... 'Fish' was one of the best pieces of art ever produced but then he disappointed us all with the tedious 'Dissected Cow'... with 'Shallow Grave' I thought 'At last!' but then I had to walk out of 'Trainspotting' after falling asleep..."

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Dear Parishioners,

Whilst Tony is away on what we all agree is a well-deserved break, he has asked me to keep an eye on things, which as you know I am only too happy to do. I realise that sometimes I am not the most popular person around the place, but I do not want to be popular and eventually people will like me for this. Obviously when you have a lot of good ideas and are a very able manager you are initially going to ruffle a few feathers. I do not mind this at all. Talking of which I have recently heard reports that various jealous groups of parishioners have been complaining about me behind my back at The Britannia Arms.

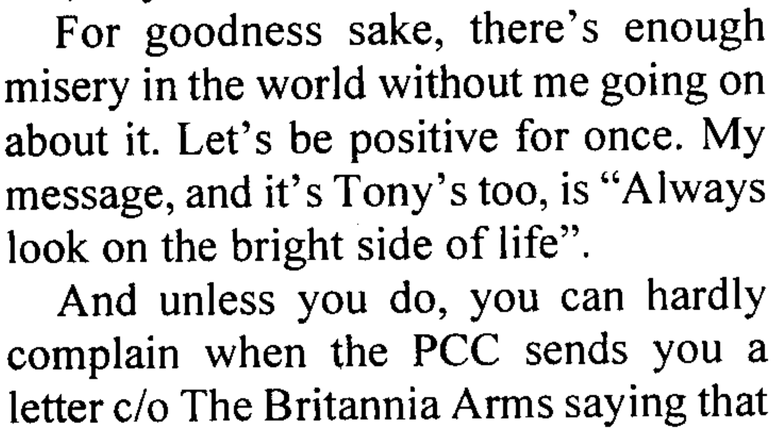
Let me make it clear that I am not in the slightest bit interested in the sort of idle chit-chat that you get after people have had a few drinks in the Lounge Bar.

Apparently, one of the main criticisms is that I have been trying to present everything in a good light and cover up the unfortunate events that happen from time to time in any parish, however well run it may be. And this parish is *very* well run, as you are aware.

For goodness sake, there's enough misery in the world without me going on about it. Let's be positive for once. My message, and it's Tony's too, is "Always look on the bright side of life".

And unless you do, you can hardly complain when the PCC sends you a letter c/o The Britannia Arms saying that you are not welcome in church any more. Is that clear enough?

Tony, by the way, has sent a charming postcard from Italy of a local football team. It is addressed to all of you, but especially to me. I will, therefore, take this opportunity to share it with you — the message on the back reads:



"We all need goals and I got two *(Book of Psalms, New English Bible)*."

Let's all remember that,

Yours sincerely,
P. MANDELSON,
Chairman PCC
in Loco Pastoris

FROM THE WORKING MEN'S CLUB

Dear Parishioners,

Whilst Tony is away in sunnier climes he has asked me to look after the shop, which I'm happy to do. The other day I was listening to the radio (Good Morning St Albion's FM) when I heard that some of our Roman Catholic friends had been stopped at the airport from coming to visit us all due to some silly red tape which I've got no time for, as you know. I was on the phone right away telling them to sort it out and be quick about it. That's the way to get things done round here, not sit around congratulating yourself on how wonderful you are, like one person I could name but won't because I don't want to cause Mr Mandelson any trouble.

Anyway, suffice to say, the matter is now being looked into — thanks to yours truly and no one else.

JP

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect those held by the PCC, PM or even Tony.

Alastair Campbell, Editor

Notices

● Mrs Harman will be conducting a conference for St Albion Fifth Form Girls on the theme "Could you become an unmarried mother?"
There will be compulsory seminars on the following:

How to say "No"
Taking precautions
The termination option
Applying for a benefit

Bank Holiday Weekend in the Church Hall. Partners Welcome.

● Mr Cook would like to thank all those who have written to him with their messages of support (and not those who made unhelpful criticisms of his conduct and suggestions about his future). Robin now hopes "a civilised line" can be drawn under this unfortunate and painful incident which was far too complex for anyone not involved to comprehend.

ST ALBION'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

FROM LADY BLACKSTONE, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF GOVERNORS

Congratulations to everyone who passed their 'A' Levels — and that was all of you, I'm glad to say. This is a tremendous result and a real tribute to all those involved — parents, teachers and, most of all *you* students. Well done, this really gives the lie to people who say standards are slipping. How can St Albion's 110% pass rate in Maths be anything but a success!

And now a small word of warning. Those of you with such excellent results may feel that you want to go on to university. Unfortunately, students now have to make a small contribution to their fees (£10,000) and it might be better if you didn't go to university but started instead on a work experience scheme straightaway. Remember, university is not for everyone, particularly not those short of money.

Tessa B.
C/o Blackstone Manor,
Little Birkbeck.

Verses By A Local Poet

100 Days

100 days have come and gone
It could not have gone quicker,
And every day has been a triumph,
Entirely due to the new vicar.

Mrs G. Rebuck,
Random House, Century Road.

(All contributions are welcome but the editor reserves the right to remove any critical references to the vicar.) AC

Thought For The Day

by Mr Mandelson (In Tony's Absence)

SOMETIMES I think about how unfair life can be. For example, the poor are very poor and do not have as much money as the rich. I think we all have to do something to help the poor — although just taking money from the rich is no solution. Nor are pious words the answer. So let's stop talking and do something as soon as we can.

(This is an extract from Mr Mandelson's talk to the village Fabian Society last week which was extremely well attended by all 3 members. AC)

DI & DODI

WORLD PICTURE SCOOP

PRIVATE EYE has paid an unprecedented £10 million to bring its readers the most important photograph in the history of the world.

The passionate embrace of two star-struck young lovers without a care in the world is one of the most touching images of the 20th Century.

It clearly shows Dodi Fayed making passionate love to the former wife of the future King of England.

Other papers have printed fake photographs in their desperate attempts to upstage the Eye in bringing you the first photograph of the Princess in full and frank uninhibited love-romps. So have we. *(Shome mishtake shurely? Ed.)*

More pix: pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 (bonus page number 94)

Late News

OASIS RELEASE NEW PUBLICITY

TOP British rock band Oasis yesterday released their latest collection of publicity, and critics reckon this new set of headlines and stories is among their very best yet. Said one music critic: "I would say that the latest hype is up there with Beatlemania, which is the true benchmark of quality PR."

GNOMEBY'S

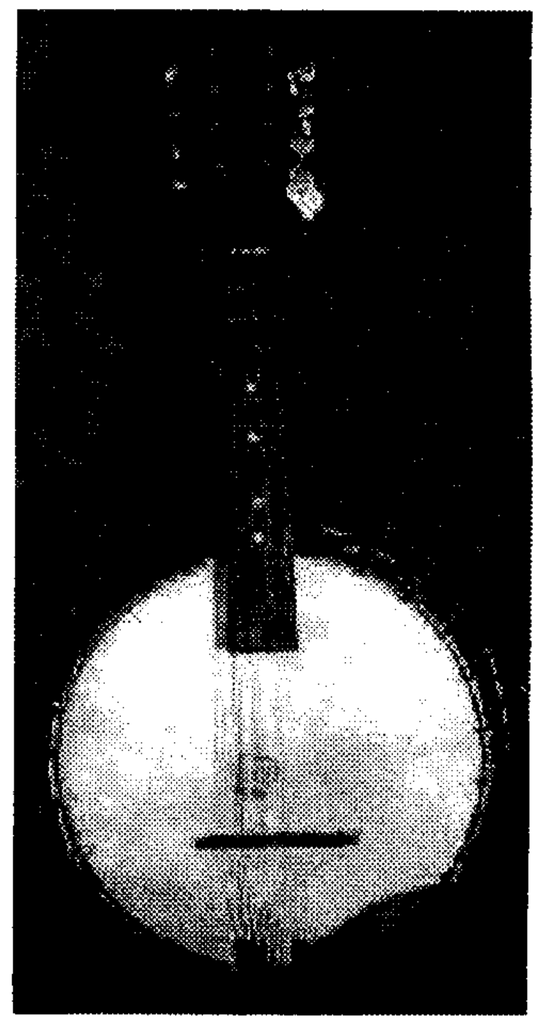
SUMMER SALE of ROYAL MEMORABILIA relating to His Royal Highness the Duke of Windsor

Formerly the property of an Egyptian Gentleman (A. Fayed)

11.00 a.m.

Lot 1. Gold-plated Waterman's fountain pen, believed to be that used to sign the formal declaration of Abdication. Complete with maker's trademark and date of manufacture (1943). Plus two nibs (slightly bent, like owner).
Estimate: £27,000.

Lot 2. One pair of lady's carpet slippers in blue velvet with dollar-sign motif and legend "Good Luck from Macey's" picked out in gold silk.
Estimate: £275,000.



Lot 3. A similar lot to above in red with label attached — "Do Not Remove. Property of the Excelsior Hotel, Grand Bahamas".
Estimate: £230,000.

Lot 4. One Banjo (by Hobbs & Verity of Fifeshire) with two strings missing. Certificate of authenticity confirming it was played by the Duke to entertain members of Hitler's staff at Buckingham Palace in 1933. No case.
Estimate: £148,000 (as illustrated).

Lot 5. Very fine Fishnet Basque with Garter Ensemble in Scarlet Satin. As worn by the Duchess during her stay at Claridges (1953).
Estimate: 12p.

Lot 6. Highly important unopened copies of Punch Magazine. Still in wholesaler's wrapping. Rare copies from 1996 to 1997.

Lot 7. A similar lot.

Lots 8-973. Similar lots.

NEW YORK – PARIS – NEASDEN

SPICE GIRLS STUDIES (1SPIC001AC) **Ken Rabone**

Mondays, 10 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. 8 weeks, cost £25

A first Honiton Certificate course exploring the possible cultural impact of the group in the 21st Century.

We will be exploring lyrics, image and the profundity of their message for the new millennium and answering the question what do people "really, really, really want?"

Honiton Community College

Yes! It's Britain's Newest Fanzine

BLAIRZONE

Announcing the release of the long-awaited record from Britain's most popular group — *"Be Her Now"* — Tony's tribute to the greatest band ever. The Thatchles.

Yes — it's taken 100 days to produce but it's been a gas, gas, gas (in the words of the late great Michael Jagger of the Rolling Stone Roses) and for once the hype is entirely justified.

Blairzone's new record is gobsmackingly brill. It's the business with knobs on. It's eleven out of ten on the Rock-o-meter. It makes the new Oasis album look like a load of old Beatles songs.
Tony (lead singer, Blairzone)

Ten Classix That We're Better Than

- Dark side of the Mandelson — **'Pink' Floyd**
- Captain Fantastic and the Gordon Brown Cowboy — **Elton John Prescott**
- The Six Wives of Robin Cook — **Rick Wakeman**
- ERM by **ERM**
- Rumours — **Fleetwood McMaster**
- Greatest Shits — **Lord Simon and Garfunkel**

(That's enough classix. Ed.)

So Wotz the Record?

- ***Record 'A' Level Passes***
- *Record Temperatures in August*
- ***Record Number of Interest Rate Rises***
- *Record Number of U-Turns Over University*

Blows yer mind or wot?

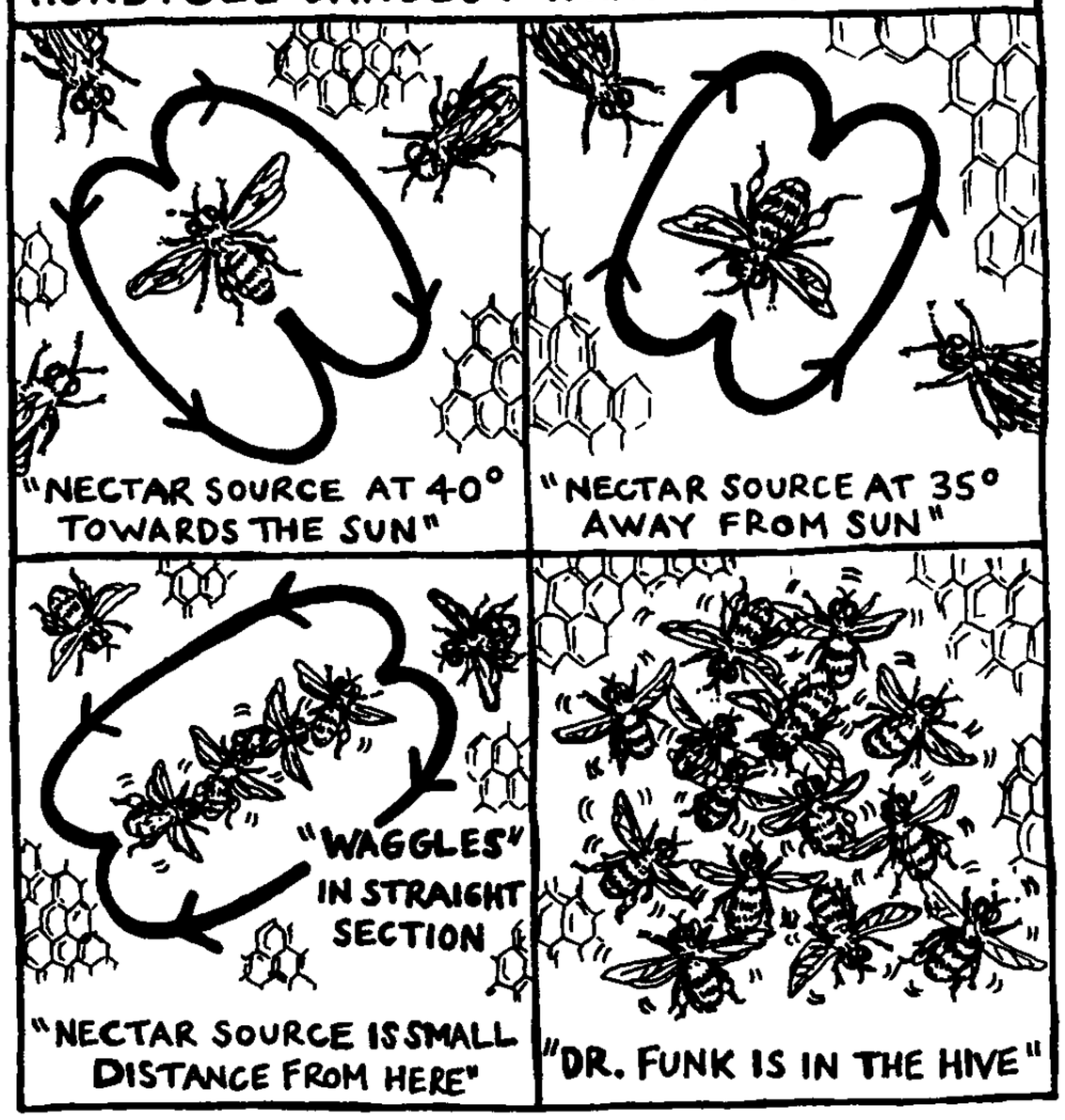
Tony's Thoughts For Rising Inflation

We're all going on a
Summer Holiday
No more workin' for
a week or two
(My thanks to the late great Keith Richard for this one)

The greatest guitarist in the world meets Chuck Berry

Apparently... BY MIKE BARFIELD

HONEYBEE DANCES: WHAT THEY MEAN


"NECTAR SOURCE AT 40° TOWARDS THE SUN"
"NECTAR SOURCE AT 35° AWAY FROM SUN"
"WAGGLES" IN STRAIGHT SECTION
"NECTAR SOURCE IS SMALL DISTANCE FROM HERE"
"DR. FUNK IS IN THE HIVE"

A Doctor writes

As a doctor I am often asked: "Why has your husband left you and run off with his secretary?".

Well, the simple answer is "I blame the Tories."

Due to the draconian cuts in NHS funding under the last government, or *Virginia bottomlensis thatcherium* to give it the full medical name, many senior doctors such as myself have to work such long hours that we never get a chance to spend time at home with our husbands.

If you are worried about your husband, have a look in the News of the World and see if there is a picture of him with some young Labour researcher.

© Dr Margaret Cook

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

Judge Keith Simpson told him that, had he been an adult, he could have been jailed for at least six years.

"I would call you a one-man crime-wave were it not for the fact others were involved," said Judge Simpson. *News Shopper (Gravesend)*

Joseph O'Dell III is put to death in Virginia despite pleas from his new wife, Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa that his life be spared; *USA Today*

Princess Dido

How They Are Related

Prince Lilo

Dame Barbara Cartland
|
Karl Marx and Lord Spencer
|
Frank Spencer
|
Spencer Tracy
|
Tracy and Sharon
|
Sharon Stone
|
Norman Stone
|
La Comtesse de Champagne
(formerly Lady Raine in Spain)
|
Billy the Shand-Kydd
|
Diana, Princess of Harrods

Sheikh Doodoo
|
Prince Fido
|
Dodi Smith (author of 101 Dal-Fayeds)
|
Prince Indeedeedoodee
|
Makhtoum Al-Randee-Pandee
|
Dodi Longlegs
|
Mohamed Al-Fayed
|
Ken Dodi and the Dodimen
|
Mrs Khashoggi-for-Questions
|
Prince Dildo

A colour licence currently costs only **£91.50** for a whole year. If you are registered blind and present your local authority certificate, you pay £1.25 less for your TV licence.

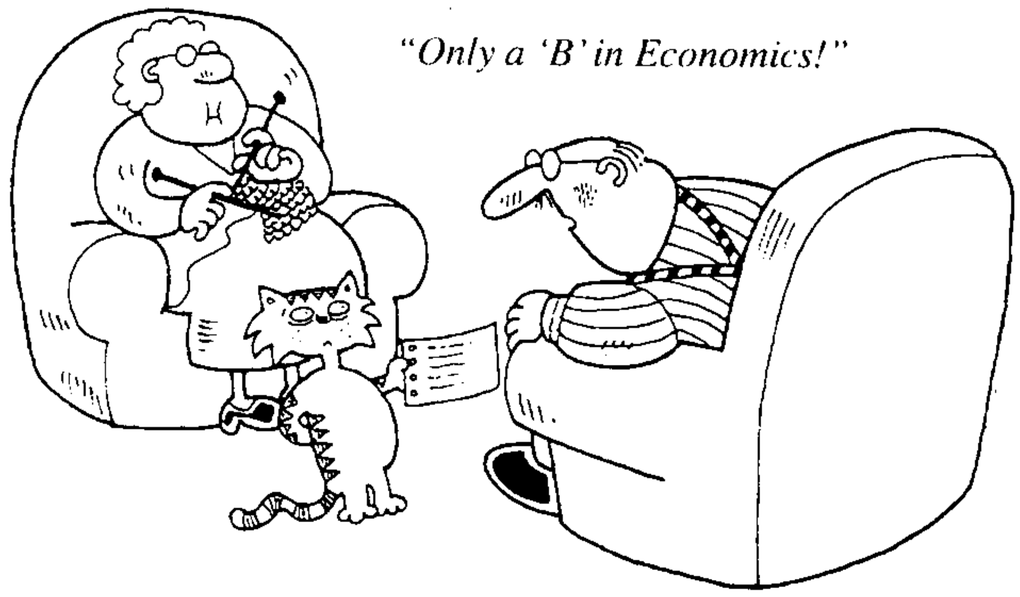
TV licensing

Call My Agent

BBC2 9.00pm

Chairman: And the next word is Toksvig. *Toksvig*. Alan Coren?

Alan Coren *(for it is he)*: Well, if you're idly sitting around in front of your television, as you might be, twiddling your thumbs or whatever else you may care to twiddle, you might chance upon a programme clearly recorded in the afternoon to be shown when no one is watching which is suddenly repeated in the evening in prime time due to Mr Birt's parsimony, he not wishing to commission anything more expensive. And that I submit is a Toksvig. That is to say, if one may say anything nowadays, a quiz programme probably made in the regions and *(continued Channel 94)*



COURT CIRCULAR

KENSINGTON PALACE
Diana, Princess of Hearts, will today receive a phone call from Mr Taki Takalotofcokupthenos, the distinguished Greek jailbird. They will discuss the possibility of her remarriage to His Royal Highness Prince Dodo of Tramp. Mr Takalotofcokupthenos will then write up his phone call in the quality periodical the Spectacularlyboring magazine, which will sell the piece to the Sun.

Diana will then attend an audience with Madame Crystal Balls who will predict that tomorrow the Princess will appear on the front page of every newspaper in the country with a short, dark, not very handsome stranger. The procession to Mrs Balls' home in Derbyshire will be ordered as follows:

1st Helicopter
Diana, Princess of Bosnia-Herzegovnia; His Royal Highness Prince Dada of Ambre-Solaire; Capt "Budgie" Bigglesworth of the Harrods Air Corps.

2nd Helicopter
Signor Slizzi Pizzi, from the Italian periodical "Nooki!"; Monsieur Pipi Tomme from the French weekly "Fuquellescorchère!"; Piers Organ from the Daily Error; and Capt "Chopper" Chopsworth of Rent-a-Copter Plc of Battersea.

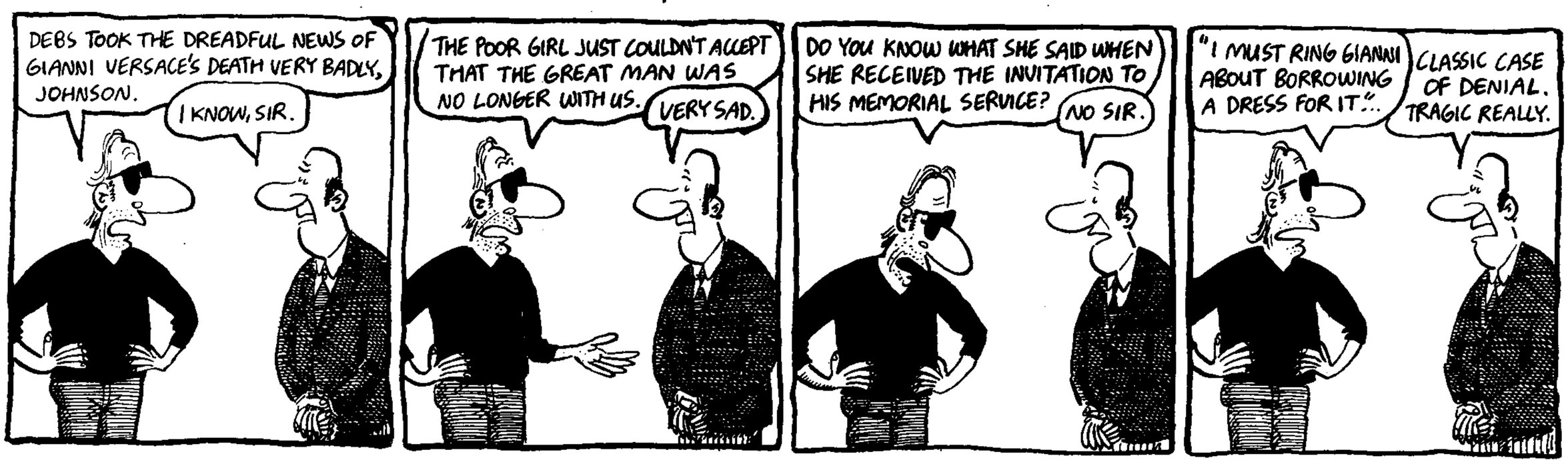
1st Schoolgirl with Instamatic
Miss Kylie Lenscap

1st Housewife with Video
Mrs Doreen Camcorder

Gawping Crowd Round Helicopter
Mr Simon Rubberneck; Mrs Sandra Rubberneck; Master Wayne Football-Shirt; Master Dean Trainers; Miss Geri Crop-Top *(That's enough names. Ed.)*

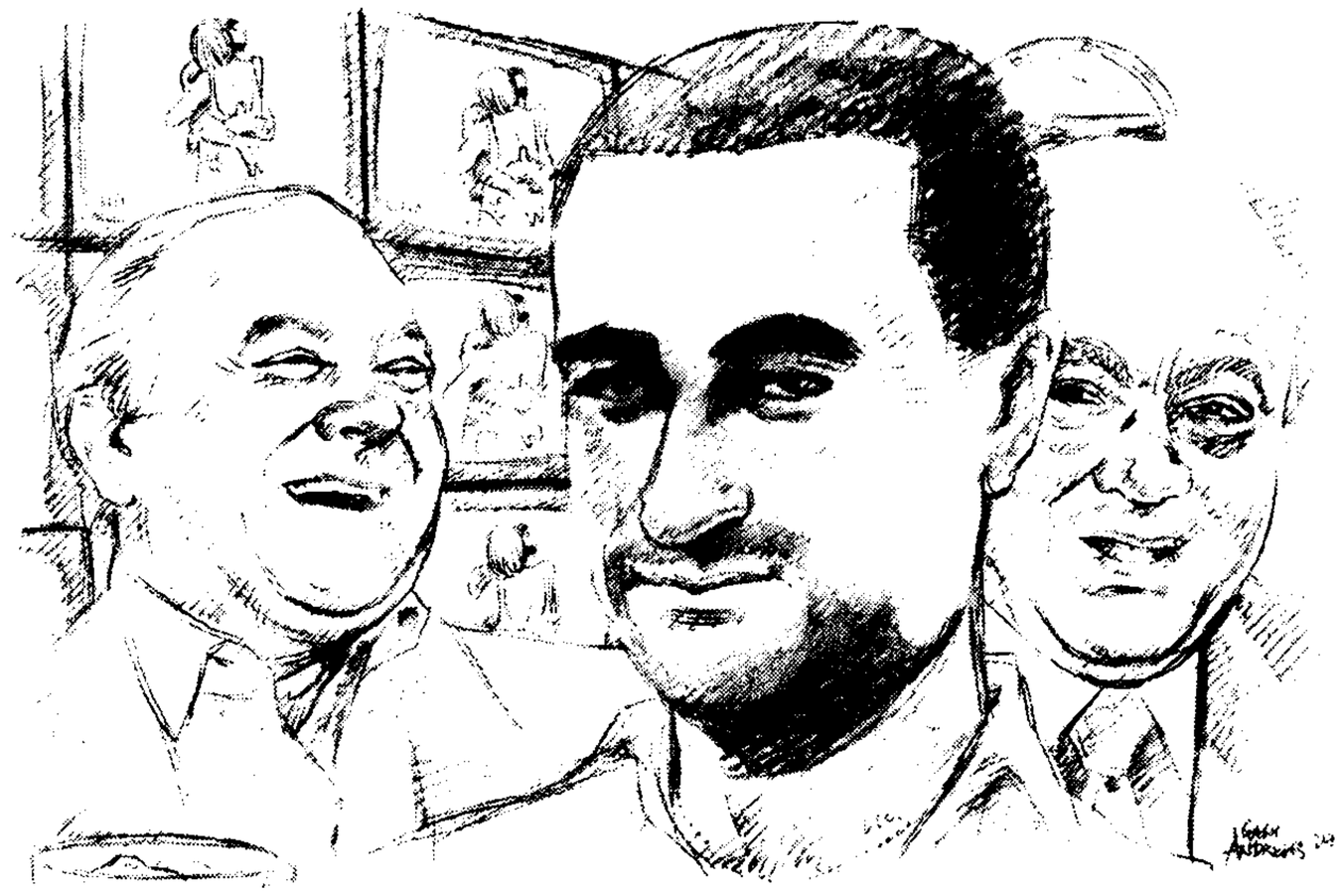
BALMORAL
His Royal Highness the Prince of Wallies will attempt to upstage his ex-wife by holding a dull photo-opportunity on the river bank. He will appear in the traditional kilt of the McNuggets and will look rather silly. He will be accompanied by their Royal Highnesses Prince William and Prince Harry who will specially remove their Harrods Baseball Hats for the duration of the shoot. Their Royal Highnesses will appear ill at ease and embarrassed.

1st Lady-in-waiting behind tree for cameramen to leave
Her Royal Highness Camilla Park 'n' Ride


DEBS TOOK THE DREADFUL NEWS OF GIANNI VERSACE'S DEATH VERY BADLY, JOHNSON.
I KNOW, SIR.
THE POOR GIRL JUST COULDN'T ACCEPT THAT THE GREAT MAN WAS NO LONGER WITH US.
VERY SAD.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT SHE SAID WHEN SHE RECEIVED THE INVITATION TO HIS MEMORIAL SERVICE?
NO SIR.
"I MUST RING GIANNI ABOUT BORROWING A DRESS FOR IT"...
CLASSIC CASE OF DENIAL. TRAGIC REALLY.

A **Sylvie Krin** *Summer Holiday Romance Special (from the Luton Airport collection)*

THE PRINCESS AND THE PLAYBOY



THE STORY SO FAR: Wily Egyptian stores magnate Mohamed Al-Fayed has failed to ensnare the lovely Princess of Wales for himself. But he has other plans. Now read on...

"FIFTH FLOOR! Ladies Haberdashery, Goldfish, Grand Pianos and Televisions!" The ornate lift purred to a halt and the attendant saluted as Al-Fayed stepped smartly from Harrods' famed Art Deco carriage onto the marbled carpet.

"Fuggin' bastard," snarled the portly entrepreneur. "How many times do I have to tell you? Punch Magazine on sale on all fuggin' floors! You're fired."

Filling the air with his rich Arabic patois, Al-Fayed strode down the mosaic hallway. He felt good — it was the fourth person he had sacked that day. And it was only 9.30.

"Good Morning, Lord Fayed," cooed a bevy of shop girls arranging a tasteful display of Moroccan casseroles and Portuguese snuff boxes ready for the summer sale. "See you later, sexy pot," he said to one particularly lissome oriental beauty and accompanied his greeting with a friendly vulgar gesture.

Yes, the day was going well and there was more good news in the television department. As he entered the Hi-Fi City he saw bank upon bank of Taiwanese Veritaki television sets displaying identical images from CNN's global news service.

"And would you believe it, folks? Lady Di is up to her tricks again," warbled Silvester Grope, CNN's celebrity correspondent. "In these pictures we can see the Royal bikini-babe in a romantic clinch with none other than the Egyptian playboy from the land of Tutankhamen, Prince Yabber Dabber Doodi, himself the heir to the priceless Harrods empire."

Al-Fayed watched entranced as CNN showed a picture of a yacht at anchor in an azure sea and there was no mistaking the handsome young couple aboard locked in a tender embrace.

Yes! It was all going to plan — even better than he had dreamed.

Already in his mind's eye the Egyptian Patriarch could picture the scene in Westminster Abbey, each seat adorned with a complementary Harrods hamper, to celebrate the marriage of the world's most beautiful woman to *his* son. And in each hamper there would be a half-bottle of Algerian Riesling, an individual vegetarian game pie, two after dinner mints with the Harrods crest on them and of course a copy of that week's...

"Excuse me, sir," said a voice at his elbow breaking into the tycoon's reverie. Al-Fayed turned to find three gaudily robed Nigerian tourists looking lost.

"Is this the throne room at Buckingham Palace, please?" asked one with a smile.

"Fugg off bastards," the Sultan of Shopkeepers retorted with a snarl. "Any day now I'll be *living* in fuggin' Buckingham Palace. You wait and see! *Then* I get my fuggin' passport..."

"NO FUGGIN' hope, Dad." The playboy Prince Dodo poured himself a large glass of Harrods Bourbon Whiskey-style drink and lit a Khashoggi Turkish cigarette.

"I'm not the marrying kind,just the fuggin'" laughed the hirsute playboy, dressed in traditional plus-fours in readiness for the Glorious Twelfth of August. He strode to the porthole and spat contemptuously into the clear waters of the Mediterranean.

His father banged his fist on the shiny mahogany sextant in the opulent stateroom of the S.S. Shaggi. His face was contorted with rage.

"You do what I say, boy — or I cut you off without fuggin' penny."

His son smiled mockingly. "I do not need your money — your famous brown envelopes will not buy me. I am a famous film producer."

"Bollogs!" shouted the father in rage, employing the colourful argot of his native Alexandrian backstreets. "If you're a fuggin' film producer, I'm the fuggin' King of England."

And so they continued as the sun sank over Cap D'Utch, and the lights of the French town of St Brigitte de Bardot began to welcome the evening sky.

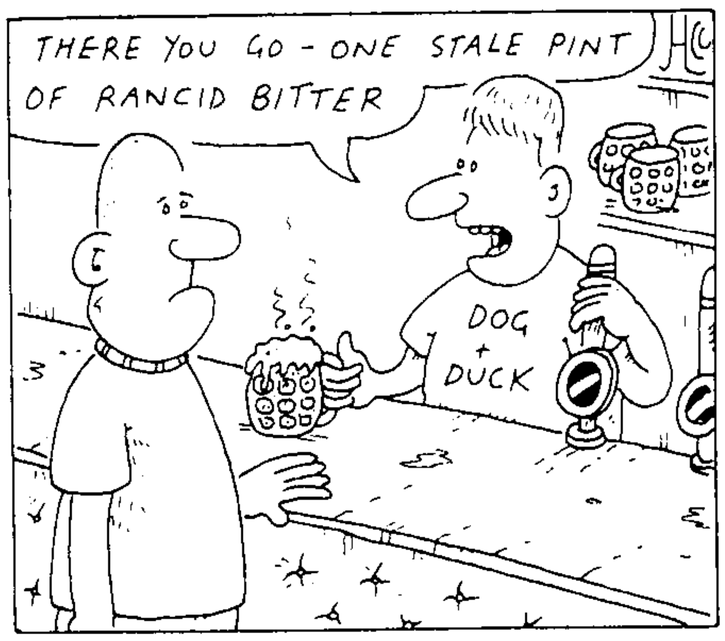
A THOUSAND miles away the beautiful woman at the centre of the storm was embracing a very elderly man in a small Bosnian village.

"And how do you come to be legless?" the saintly princess asked the old man compassionately.

"Too much hoshpitality in Club Classh," slurred the Telegraph's veteran reporter, known to the world as W.F. Deedes.

(To be continued)

The Truth About Pub Refurbishment



Before

After

DANCE

"Elvis — The Ballet". The internationally renowned Dance company of Zagreb tell the story of Elvis Presley reset in 15th Century Russia at the Court of Czar Zsa Gabor. Elvis is ingeniously danced by prima ballerina Olga Maitlandoff.
The Royal Caledonian Free Hall, 7.30pm (Venue No. 1,275)

FILM

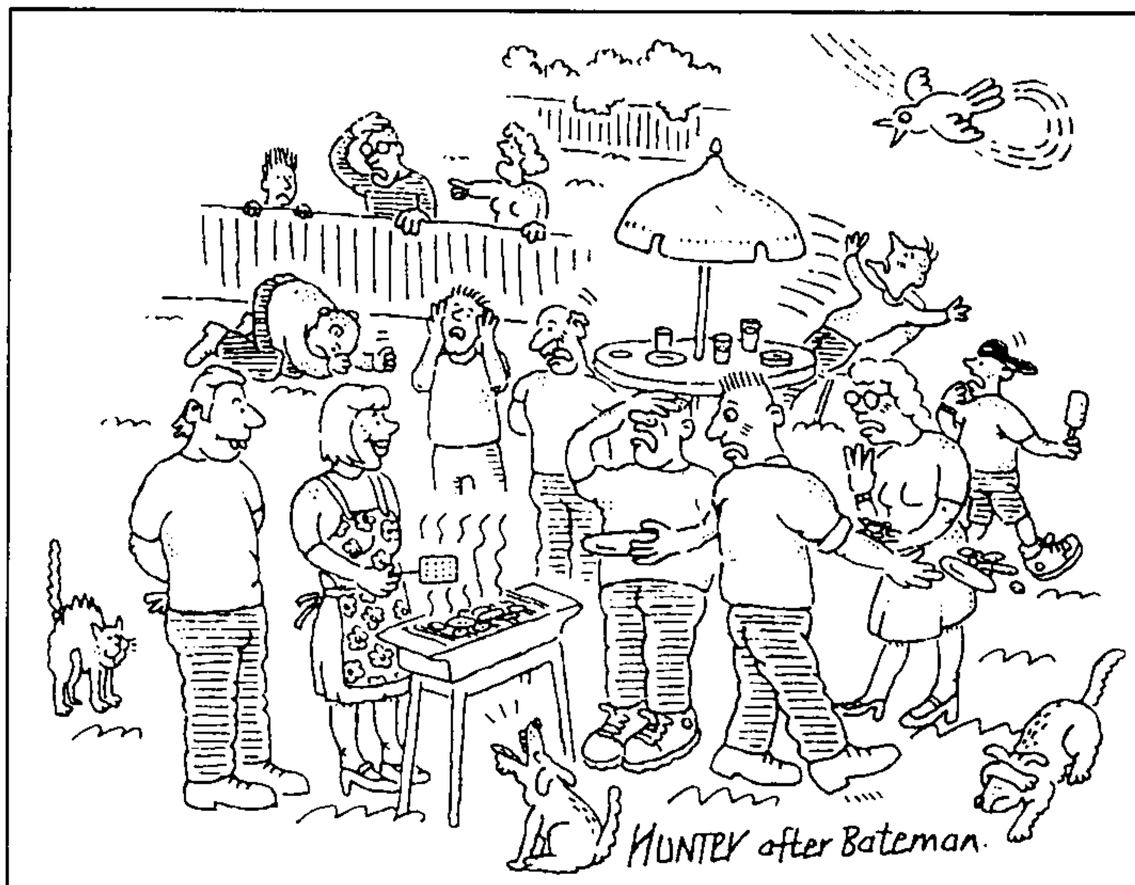
"The Vomit Boys". World premiere of Gus McDuff's touching rite of passage tragi-comedy telling the story of three heroin-addicted HIV patients who go on a trip to EuroDisney. Winner of the coveted Palme Olive at the Haiti Festival de Cinéma.
The Old Railway Museum, 8.00pm (Venue No. 3,462)

COMEDY

"Slabb and Bucket". Michael Slabb and Rick Bucket, the stars of Channel 5's late night stand-up newcomers' show "Give Us 5!", consolidate their growing reputation as the most innovative comedians performing on the fringe today. The show includes their famous Star-Trek sketch and the highly controversial Buying-Bananas-in-Supermarket-Routine.
"I laughed and laughed" — Nicholas McJongh, Scots and Scotsmen
St Jaspan's Church, 2.30pm (Venue No. 6,532)

CHILDREN

"Romeo and Juliet". The acclaimed Puppet Theatre of Ontario present their all-moose version of Shakespeare's tragedy. Complete with unforgettable specially written songs including: "Blue Moose" and "Can't Help Loving That Moose of Mine".
The Prince's Street Library, 4.00pm (Venue No. 25,378)

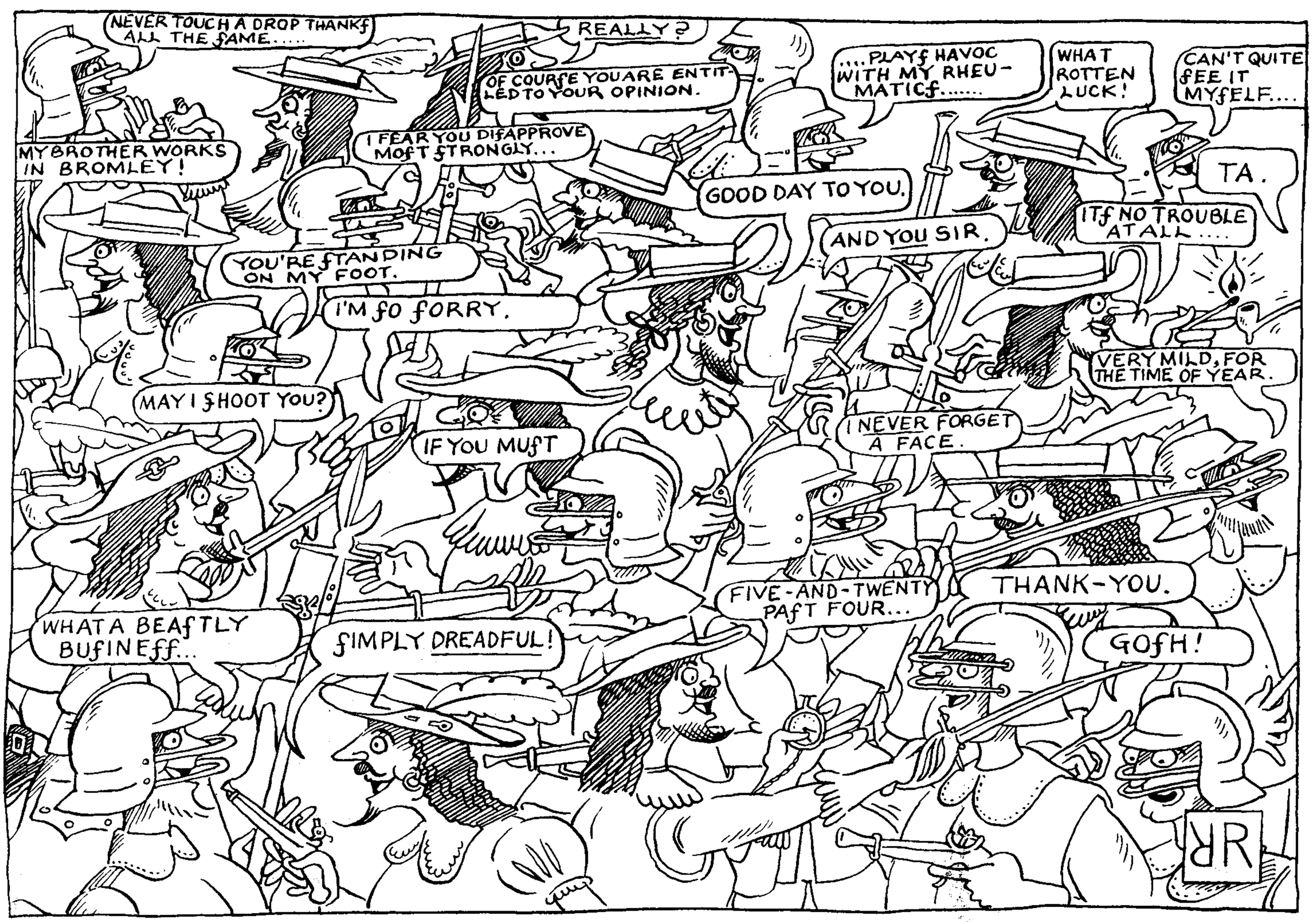


The New Man who put his wife in charge of the barbecue

ART

"The Sandwich As Symbol". First ever exhibition of sandwiches from railway stations around the world, assembled by Austrian multi-media artists Gottlieb von Sarnie and Preta Manger.
"This extraordinary triumph dazzles the eye and assaults the nose with a binary ocular and olfactorial brilliance that gives the sandwich a supreme cultural resonance. The black bread, yellow yak-meat and bright red peppers of the Istanbul Double Decker Sizzler will remain with me my whole life" — Richard Dorment, Daily Telegraph
The National Gallery of Scotland, all day (Venue No. 178,402)

(That's enough Edinburgh. Ed.)



The Engliſh Civil War

Literary Review

A load of Cobbetts

Anyone for England? A Search for British Identity
Clive Aslet
(Little Brown £17.50)

This England
Pete Davies
(Little Brown £16.99)

HERE they come, cascading grimly into the remainder bins, all those myriad books of the 1990s with "England" somewhere in the title: *England's Dreaming; Darkest England; English Settlement; The English Patient; The Fatal Englishman...* Never mind the distances of time, subject or literary form, the motif tends to be the same: national malaise is in the air, and the scope for the *litterateur* with a notion or two about English identity and where it all went wrong is pretty nearly limitless.

Books about UK plc and its lamentable condition fall into three main categories: dreadful "state of the nation" novels (the exception, perhaps, being Jonathan Coe's *What A Carve Up*, 1994); "tours" of the kind pioneered 60 years ago by Priestley and Orwell, in which a sprint through Cleethorpes is followed by a trot round Barnsley and, in the case of Priestley and Orwell's pallid imitators, a desperate attempt at synthesis; and upper-level journalists' "discussions". *Anyone for England?*, whose compiler, the editor of *Country Life*, apparently wrote it for his infant son, and *This England* — habitués may remember Pete Davies as the author of *All Played Out*, a poptastic book about the 1990 World Cup — are two of the latter.

Neither, it should immediately be said, is up to much. Each, in particular, betrays an irretrievable reluctance to define the beast it pursues. "This England is a nice cup of tea," Davies writes helplessly at one point, in what one hopes is a deliberate parody of Orwell's earlier panoptics. "It's real ale and video games and *Crinkly Bottom* fruit machines. It's *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street*, Trevor Macdonald and the National Lottery..." Yet both Aslet and Davies, in their own ways, are exemplary practitioners of, if not writing about Englishness, then the *stances* that get taken up when embarking on this sort of enterprise.

"The decline in Harris tweed reflects a shift in British values," Aslet declaims at one stage. It turns out that he's making a halfway reasonable point about our lack of interest in fresh air, but the effect is to drench his book in a kind of spiritual embalming fluid. Monarchical decline. The food we eat. Our careworn children. Nothing wrong with this roster of national ills, perhaps, or even with the patrician lament that sounds above them, only that symptoms (spitting in the street, TV satire of Her Majesty) tend to edge out causes. Curious, too, that in 200 plus pages of faintly bewildered threnody, our national artistic life scarcely gets a mention. Michael Bracewell's recent study of English pop, *England is Mine* (HarperCollins £18) — which identifies Oscar Wilde as the precursor of Britpop — might reach occasionally quite loopy heights, but its analysis of symbolic bits of Englishness — suburbia, the North and so on — takes in whole areas of our national landscape that Aslet barely notices.

Pete Davies is a touch better, if only because his evidence comes from real people rather than newspaper cuttings. *This England* recounts a year spent in his home constituency of Calderdale, Yorks, following the Labour candidate around the place in the run-up to the election (she wins) and eyeing up the area's problems. Despite occasional worries over the excesses of the Blairite machine, it is, of course, quite incorrigibly biased. One of Davies's favourite tricks is the shocked subjunctive approach, as in (interviewing an anxious headmaster) "If this were coming from some lefty moaner with naff badges on his lapel and smudged pamphlets in his pocket, you'd dismiss it as alarmist claptrap. But... etc etc". The general effect, what with the jokes and the laddish asides, is rather like reading 60 *Independent* op-ed columns in rapid succession. *Now, I'm a pretty hip young guy. Brainy too. But just because I did well under Mrs T I wouldn't want you to think I enjoyed it. And I wouldn't dream of admitting that my trademark refusal to be impressed actually makes me hugely impressionable...* That kind of thing.

As for the politics, you can only agree with Orwell's 50 year-old comment that the really depressing thing about general elections was not that people wanted to vote for your opponents but that they didn't know who the candidates were or even that an election was taking place. Interestingly enough, in his chats with harassed social workers and whey-faced teachers, Davies does indirectly reveal one crucial tendency in recent British history. It is that, broadly speaking, about 25 per cent of the population has trouble functioning in our advanced society — passing exams, holding down jobs and relationships (this includes the Royals, natch). Until 1979 this didn't much matter because the state subsidised their dysfunction. With the advent of Thatcherite conservatism this sizeable chunk of society suddenly had its shortcomings pitilessly exposed, and then ignored. Somehow you feel the growth industry in books about their plight is scant compensation.

Books & Bookmen

☐ NEVER mind a prospective spat or two about the contents of next month's Booker shortlist, connoisseurs of literary controversy should brace themselves for this autumn's real *cause celebre* — A M Homes's *The End of Alice*. Grim fictional memoirs by convicted paedophiles, anyone?

Homes (a girl, by the way) is, er, your man. As it happens, *Alice*'s appearance on the list of a UK publisher — it has already whomped up a storm in the States — is almost solely down to the efforts of Transworld's John Saddler. First produced nearly two years ago at a HarperCollins editorial meeting by Saddler in his capacity as editorial director of the up-market Flamingo imprint, Ms Home's gravelly ms was rejected on the grounds that it made most of those assembled feel sick.

Happily the paymasters at Transworld — where Saddler subsequently moved to head the soon-to-be-launched Anchor imprint — had fewer scruples. Expect another tedious debate on the limits of artistic freedom this November.

■ *WHAT a shock to find the diary of the Sunday Times Books section implying that the Edinburgh Book Festival is badly organised.*

This item is of course entirely unrelated to the fact that the nearest rival to Edinburgh, the festival at Hay-on-Wye, is sponsored by... the Sunday Times.

☐ ALTHOUGH the *Eye* revealed that sales of Gerry Adams's alleged best-seller *Before the Dawn* had been feeble, the collapse of his Irish publisher Brandon is still a bit of a shock.

Adams's rehabilitation, however temporary, as a man of peace does however offer those houses, led by Heinemann, which hold international rights to the book an opportunity to try and shift some of the unsold stock.

Although this time last year the great John Blake was flogging *The Nemesis Files*, a book which made allegations against the Brits so extreme that even Sinn Fein filed them under "d for deranged", he may yet contribute to sabotaging Adams's chances of international acclaim.

"It's a place where people have to pay to see how they were once exploited"

Having quietly abandoned *The Nemesis Files* by Paul Bruce (a non-existent "ex-SAS hero") when film deals proved elusive, Blake turned to the opposite extreme with a book by genuine ex-IRA man Martin McGartland.

His recollections have proven a hit domestically, and an international campaign is now getting underway. There are even prospects for a big screen version, and McGartland is set to entertain hacks around the world with anecdotes about how he was kidnapped and tortured by Adams's bodyguards.

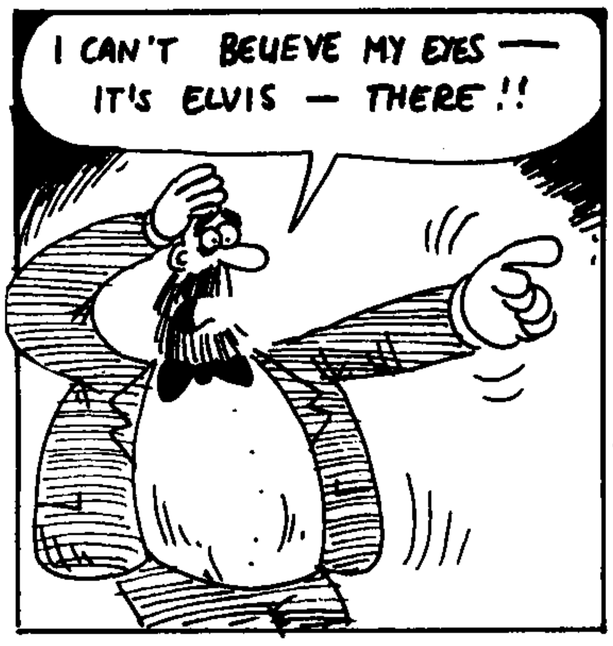
Only one author is likely to come well out of the competing biographies. Adams vs McGartland; Blake vs Heinemann. Watch this space...

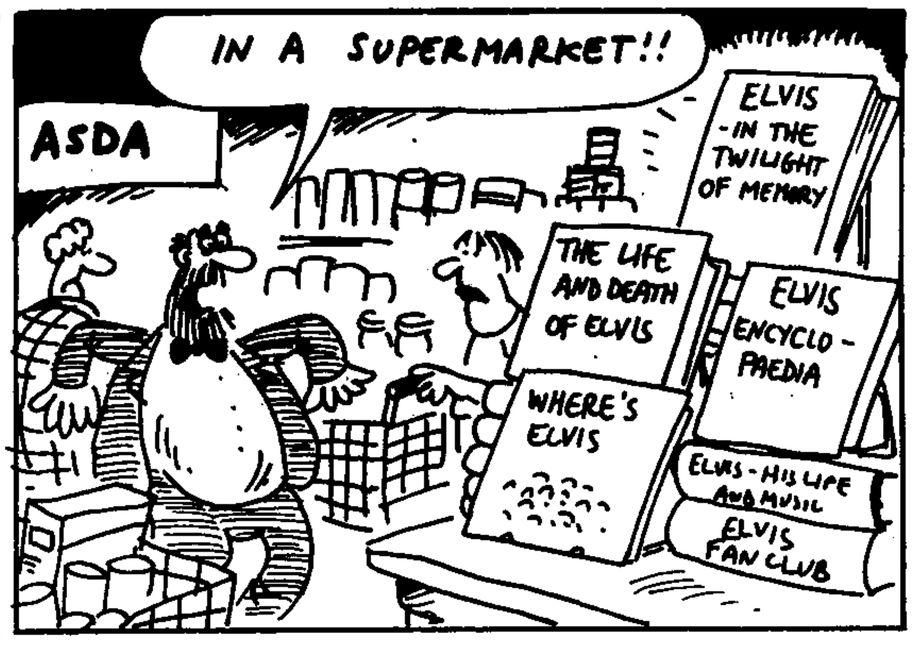
'Bookworm'

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

TORY MP Archie Norman and his Asda management team are doing their bit for Tories fallen from grace. Former MP Edwina Currie's bonkbuster books, *A Parliamentary Affair* and *A Woman's Place*, are both on sale in Archie's Asda stores. Both erudite hardbacks formerly sold for around the £15 mark.

Alas times are hard and Archie has now been forced to ruthlessly remainder his former colleague's books to just £3.99 each.





footnotes

THE GREEDBURY REPORT

SIR Richard Greenbury is very proud of his 1995 Greenbury Report on executive pay, which has some harsh things to say about share options schemes which hand out money to directors for no extra effort.

Section 6 (28) of the report says: "Depending as they do on changes in the share price between two points of time, share option schemes may confer on directors windfall gains that have nothing to do with their own efforts but reflect exercise price discounts, general price inflation or general movements in the share price of the whole sector."

A perfect example of what the report is getting at is a new executive share option scheme recently proposed by the directors of a very well-known British company. This allows executive share options to be "exercised" (cashed in) according to the growth of earnings per share "in line with RPI growth" (ie "general price inflation" as above) or "relative to that of the other constituents of the FTSE 1000" (ie "general movements in the share price of the whole sector", as above).

The overall effect of this new scheme will be precisely, to quote Greenbury, to "confer on directors windfall gains that have nothing to do with their own efforts". A recent report from PIRC, the watchdog of company behaviour, especially of excesses in executive pay, concludes: "We do not consider this scheme is in the shareholders' long-term interests."

The company in question is Marks & Spencer (chairman and *de facto* chief executive: Sir Richard Greenbury). Sir Richard, who has nearly a million share options, will be one of the main beneficiaries of the new scheme.

PS: Marks & Spencer doled out its usual £40,000 to the Tory Party in time for the election. This donation gave special pleasure to two of the directors who approved it: The Hon David Sieff, a former Tory Party treasurer, and Lady Young, a former chief of Tory Party organisation and senior Tory Minister.

Mine's a Boddingtons

■ WHILE the campaign against land mines basked in the publicity provided by the Princess of Wales's visit to Bosnia, the most ambitious of the British anti-mine charities suffered a setback.

Frank Cook, Labour MP for Stockton North, resigned as a trustee of the Mine Victims Fund which he had joined with enthusiasm two years ago, and on whose behalf he invited Nelson Mandela to be President. (The invitation was declined).

In those two years Cook had, he said, "received neither notice of meetings nor reports of progress". He also complained about a speech by Michael Boddington at a recent London seminar on land-mines. Dr Boddington, an agricultural economist devoted to the free market, says it is "largely true" that the Mine Victims Fund has been "dormant" and had "fallen into disrepair". His ambitions for the Fund, however, are still enormous. "We need to raise $200m to $400m for an endowment fund to look after mine victims," he says. How was that project coming along? "All I can say," he says, "is 'watch this space'."

Frank Cook is not the first casualty of the cluster of anti-mine companies formed round an education charity called the Fund for International Security. FIS is run by Mr Stan Windass from his home, The Rookery, near Banbury. The Cambodia Trust was founded in 1989 and soon became involved in making and fitting limbs for mine victims in Cambodia. In the early 1990s, with the help of big grants from UNESCO, The European Union and the British government, the Trust established an excellent unit and training school in Cambodia, which have helped some 5000 amputees. The Trust gathered round it a glittering array of patrons (Margaret Drabble, Desmond Tutu, etc) and distinguished trustees, most of them connected with Oxford. The chairman was the Trinity history don Peter Carey. Other trustees were Ravynn Karet-Coxon who is related to the Cambodian royal family, Anthony Smith, president of Magdalen College Oxford, Brian Walker, a former director of OXFAM, Diana Clews, an Oxford classics lecturer and the film director Roland Joffe, who rarely attended meetings.

In 1992 the Trust's newly-appointed field director in Cambodia, David Appleton, resigned in protest against the setting up of a commercial company in Malaysia to trade with the proceeds of the sale of artificial limbs donated by the NHS. The medical director also resigned on another matter. An application for funds to the Committee for Medical and Scientific Aid for Vietnam Laos and Cambodia was turned down. In December 1994, three of the trustees, Brian Walker, Diana Clews and Ravynn Karet-Coxon, signed a memo to the other trustees setting down their deep concerns about the Trust. They complained that the minutes of the meetings bore little relation to what took place. They questioned a regular annual payment of nearly £50,000 a year from the Cambodia Trust to the Foundation of International Security — a sum which represented almost half the FIS's total income. After a long and frosty argument at a trustees' meeting on 6 March 1995, Brian Walker announced that the three protesters had no alternative but to take their complaints to the Charity Commissioners. A meeting with the Commissioners was arranged for 23 May. On 6 May chairman Carey called a special annual general meeting and demanded the re-election of the trustees. By four votes (including a proxy vote from a Malaysian businessman) to three, Brian Walker and Diana Clews were not re-elected. Later that year Karet-Coxon was also removed. The purge of the whistleblowers was complete.

CLASHED: Tony Smith (left) and Brian Walker

After a detailed study of the three trustees' complaints, the Charity Commissioners called for changes in the management of the Trust, but did not insist on the removal of any of the remaining trustees. The Trust appointed some new trustees but continued under the same management.

RESIGNED: Frank Cook MP

In 1996-97, income slumped from more than £1m the previous year to £572,406. Administration and fundraising expenses were up — to £73,921 and spending on travel was almost as high — at £47,733. The payments to FIS are still going on.

Jean Hollis, UK administrator of the Trust, tells the *Eye*: "There is a contract with the Foundation for International Security for the sum of £50,310." She explains: "The Foundation is responsible for advising the Board on policy and strategy, the procurement of financial and material resources, the appointment and dismissal of all expatriate staff, the management of Trust resources and the preparation of Trust accounts and regular reports to Trustees."

This year, a new charity fathered by FIS, POWER, has been formed to carry out limb-fitting work in other countries, notably Mozambique. POWER, whose chief executive is Michael Boddington, has secured a lottery grant of £175,000 for a project in Laos and a further £100,000 a year for three years from the British government. Michael Boddington utterly rejects criticism of the Cambodia Trust, POWER or the dormant Mine Victims Fund. He says the Trust was "completely vindicated" by the Charity Commissioners. He insists he always travels cheaply. "We have a wonderful programme in Cambodia" he says. "It would be extremely sad if that was besmirched by somebody's sad and vindictive vendetta." Asked why a trustee with such a long and distinguished record in the aid field as Brian Walker should have complained against his own Trust to the Charity Commissioners, Dr Boddington replied: "You have to understand that Brian is a former director of Oxfam and IIED, yet he doesn't have any medals for all that work."

Brian Walker is a Quaker and has turned down more than one honour on principle.

STAGG HUNTING: 4

Screwing the news

THE supreme art of cheque book journalism is to buy a story, print it — and then refuse to pay for it. This was done with consummate skill on 10 August by Neville Thurlbeck, crime correspondent of the *News of the World* with the co-operation of his legal department and editor.

Colin Stagg, the police suspect for the 1992 murder of Rachel Nickell on Wimbledon Common, was acquitted after Mr Justice Ognall contemptuously threw out the prosecution case. His strongest supporter was Neville Thurlbeck who befriended Stagg's family, ingratiated himself with Stagg's lawyers and proclaimed his view Stagg was innocent. Stagg duly sold his story to the *Screws* for £40,000. Before he did so, the men from the *Screws* insisted he take a lie detector test and were plunged in gloom when he passed.

Stagg has since passed yet another lie detector test set up for him by the *Cook Report*, who paid him £2000. Recently, Stagg approached Thurlbeck and asked how much he'd get for talking about the Nickell case under the influence of the truth drug. On 31 July Thurlbeck went to Stagg's home with a contract from the *News of the World* offering Stagg £20,000 to tell his story under the truth drug. In his own handwriting, Thurlbeck scrawled on the contract: "The contributor (Stagg) agrees that no monies will be paid to him in the event that his revelations under the drug or subsequent to it being administered, confirm that he carried out the killing or lied on oath or to police". Stagg signed happily.

Interviewed under the drug Stagg once more denied the killing, denied seeing Rachel on the Common and denied carrying a knife. Asked what time he was on Wimbledon Common that day, he replied: "I think between 9.30 to gone 10". Pressed as to the time, he insisted he was not on the Common after 10.15. Rachel was murdered at 10.30.

Despite this categorical denial, the *Screws* got very excited. Stagg had told police in 1993 that he thought he was back home by 9.30 on the murder morning. Here he was saying he was there between 9.30 and 10! What a scoop! "MURDER SUSPECT MAKES AMAZING CONFESSION" and "I LIED ABOUT RACHEL" were the headlines on the *News of the World* spread, though in the entire interview there was not a single confession nor a single lie about Rachel.

The *Mail on Sunday*, which has been carrying out a long vendetta against Colin Stagg, was equally excited and copied their rival's story. Two days later, on 12 August, Stagg rang the news desk at the *News of the Screws* about his £20,000. He couldn't have it, he was told, because he had broken his contract. His interview under drugs showed he had "lied to the police".

Stagg's lawyers at the time of his acquittal, Ian Ryan, solicitor, and Jim

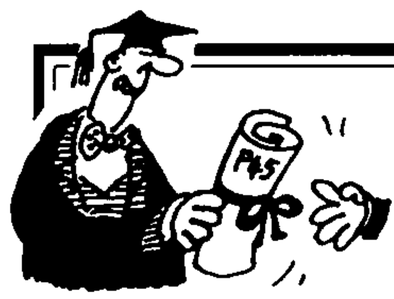
COLIN STAGG

ROBERT NAPPER

Sturman, barrister, have fired off a furious four-page letter to Thurlbeck complaining about "the newspaper's disgraceful article which sinks to new depths in seeking to manipulate the facts in this terrible case". The letter sets out a long series of crass errors in the article. "It is a great pity," the lawyers concluded, "that certain national newspapers still unquestioningly follow the police version of events and are either unable or unwilling seriously to investigate this tragic case".

A more promising subject for such investigation might be Robert Napper, who murdered a woman in circumstances grimly similar to the Nickell murder.

Not long after Rachel Nickell was savagely and sadistically knifed to death in the presence of her child, Napper savagely and sadistically knifed to death Samantha Bisset and her four-year-old child. Samantha's flat was just off Plumstead Common. Napper, who pleaded guilty, admitted to three other rapes in South London, all with a knife, all on common land. One of these rapes included an unusual injury strikingly similar to one of the wounds on Rachel Nickell. The police and the prosecution in the Napper case were all struck by the similarities and said so. Even the Daily Mail crime sleuths were alerted. They reported the Napper atrocity under the front page headline: "DID HE KILL RACHEL TOO?"



High Principals

GYM'LL FIX IT

■ **THE two sides of modern further education are on display in the countryside round Norwich.**

First, the cuts. The horticultural training centre at Burlingham Gardens, where for 75 years students have been taught practical agriculture and horticulture, is being shut down. The 200 students have been told to go elsewhere. Seven lecturers are sacked. The orchards, farmland and glasshouses, all carefully prepared for practical teaching, are to be flogged off to property developers and are expected to "realise" between £250,000 and £500,000.

Secondly, the waste. At Easton College, the other half of Burlingham Gardens, a huge new sports hall is planned at a cost of £1.5m. A third of this will come from Lottery money. Have students or lecturers asked for this extravaganze? Not at all. The gym is not really for students at all, but for visiting businessmen. For months finance chiefs at Easton have been envying the success of their richer neighbour, the University of East Anglia, in attracting businessmen to conferences. They calculate that with a spanking new sports hall they can beat the university hollow. So in one half of the college priceless educational facilities are closed down; in the other half useless ones erected.

PS: The closure announcement came too late to stop an exhibition of photographs in Norwich — all showing how wonderful and and indispensable the college at Burlingham Gardens is, oops, sorry, was.

QUOTE TO REMEMBER: "We are doing well ourselves but the cuts are making it difficult for the further education sector as a whole." — Michael Franks, deputy principal, Easton College. *Eastern Daily Press*, August 1.

SWIFT AND SURE

■ **LECTURERS at Filton College, Bristol, who were trying to combat management proposals to sack 50 staff were surprised to discover that a new worker had been hired.**

Tricia Swift was called in as a consultant to advise how to claim "additional support units" — extra government money for students with special needs. For three years, college lecturers had been telling their managers how to claim this money, only to be told to mind their own business. The lecturers were even more surprised when they discovered that the new consultant was getting £2 for every unit claimed. In two days the industrious Tricia totted up 23,000 units, costing the college £46,000.

PS: The principal of Filton, Hilary Cowell, is well-briefed on how to sack her staff. She sits on the board of the Association of Colleges (AOC), otherwise known as the Association for Cutbacks.

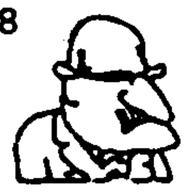
New low at Ewloe

THE Waterhouse inquiry into child abuse in North Wales has been hearing a horrific series of allegations from former residents of Ty'r Felin, a children's home run by the former Gwynedd County Council.

The allegations have ranged from outright sexual abuse to toleration of systematic bullying to the forcing of a 12-year-old girl to dress as a maid and lick the feet of a staff member.

The proceedings in the small town at Ewloe have effectively been ignored by the press, partly because the rules of the inquiry insist on the confidentiality of alleged abusers. This confidentiality is being stretched to the limit, and as a result has obscured the most remarkable feature of the recent revelations. At least 60 complaints, for instance, have been made against the former member of staff at T'yr Felin who featured in almost all the recent revelations. The allegations were taken up by the police, who passed what they found to the Director of Public Prosecutions. At no time were any proceedings started against the alleged abuser.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183



In the City

" THE LIES of Mohamed Fayed and his success in gagging the Press created... new fact: that lies were the truth and that the truth was a lie." So concludes the damning 1988 report by then QC, now judge, Henry Brooke and leading City accountant Hugh Aldous into the background of the man whose son Dodi has done a little more than dance with the Princess of Wales.

Almost a decade later there is no need to gag the hacks. The Diana Factor means they are only too willing to buy into the myth of the fabulously wealthy Harrods pharaoh and a mini-pharaoh playboy. It is as though the Mohamed Fayed exposed by the DTI inspectors as a perjurer and a forger was the impostor who writes Dodi Fayed's rubber cheques.

The DTI report branded Mohamed Fayed an imposter, a phoney pharaoh. It was his "whatever it takes" campaign to reverse that verdict which made Fayed the corrupter of any Tory MP willing to be corrupted. Remarkably, this made him a hero in the eyes of those who revelled in the Tory sleaze he exposed — after his campaign had failed. Only the legal loophole which ensures bribing an MP is not a criminal offence prevented Fayed from facing possible prosecution. But that was overlooked in the press's feeding frenzy.

Similarly, once Princess Diana was first his guest and then Dodi's latest squeeze all those brown envelopes stuffed with cash were quickly forgotten. So, too, were the 752-page DTI findings. History was not just repeated but rewritten. Just as Brooke and Aldous reported how Fayed reinvented himself with the help of slavish hacks, PR puffery and legal goon squads, so the same tactics have resulted in their report being ignored. The current mindset of those who cannot be bothered to read is to take the Fayed feed and declare the report discredited. A view not shared by the Bank of England, which removed Fayed from control of the Harrods Bank.

So it is worth revisiting those dusty findings to get a flavour of the man for whom Princess Diana is the latest in a long line of freeloaders, many of whom came to regret accepting a Fayed freebie because he always keeps the receipts.

Few reports from the Department of Timidity & Inaction have been written in terms such as those employed by Brooke and Aldous in describing how Fayed and his brothers deceived City regulators and the government in order to takeover House of Fraser, the owners of Harrods, in 1985:

"As month after month of our investigation went by we uncovered more and more cases where the Fayeds were plainly telling us lies ... Time and time again the truth of the Fayeds' account was exploded by reliable contemporary documents ... We received evidence from the Fayeds, under solemn affirmation and in written memoranda, which was false and which the Fayeds knew to be false. In addition the Fayeds produced a set of documents they knew to be false ... The Fayeds produced to us birth certificates which were false and which they knew to be false. They repeatedly lied to us about their family background, their early business life and their wealth ... The evidence that they were telling lies to us was quite overwhelming ... After watching and hearing them give evidence for two days we considered that Mohamed and Ali Fayed were witnesses on whose word it would be unsafe to rely on any issue of any importance."

The DTI inspectors experienced at first hand an approach which has worked so well for Fayed in rewriting history with the assistance of uninquisitive hacks. "Mohamed's skill in exaggerating the truth before an audience whom he believes to be ignorant of the true facts was clearly apparent," they declared. Mohamed and Ali pretended "they were the innocent victims of some gigantic conspiracy". Sound familiar?

The inspectors were only the last to be lied to by the Fayeds, who began with their advisers and moved upwards to regulators, civil servants and ministers. "It is, we hope, rare for deception of regulatory authorities to be practised on such a grand scale," declared the report.

Why was it necessary for Fayed, a successful businessman, to become a phoney pharaoh? Faced with the onslaught from his outwitted former associate "Tiny" Rowland, who had long coveted Harrods, Fayed had to prove he had the money to buy HoF and was not acting as a front or using the Sultan of Brunei's cash.

Mohamed Fayed's deception began and continues by dubbing himself more grandly "al-Fayed". The inspectors found his justification for this "bogus so far as Egyptian law is concerned". His next ploy was to create the fantasy of coming from an old established wealthy Egyptian family which could start to explain how he personally could afford the £570m for HoF rather than, as Rowland alleged, using powers of attorney over substantial Swiss funds of the Sultan.

"The image they created ... of their wealthy Egyptian ancestry was completely bogus," say the inspectors, who describe as "overwhelming" the evidence of the Fayeds' humble origins and limited business interests. "False evidence was adduced to us in order to attempt to deceive us about the Fayeds' background. The Fayeds' misconduct was ... aggravated by the way in which they completely deceived their own solicitor with the intention he should, in all innocence, give us evidence which they knew to be false."

Subsequent lies were designed to prove the Fayeds were billionaires. The inspectors soon discovered Mohamed Fayed had a "general tendency to talk up their total worth". A tactic that continues to this day, because it works with those only too happy to be less questioning than Brooke and Aldous. Their conclusion: the Fayeds' claim to wealth "on a stupendous scale" did not "stand up to serious examination", was "grossly exaggerated" and in some aspects "preposterous" if not "wholly untrue". "It was a false image and they knew it."

Lesser men would have crumbled. But Mohamed Fayed survived the inspectors' demolition job. Fayed survived because the Conservatives were not about to punish a generous donor (of at least £250,000) who had friends at the Thatcher court. This inaction and Fayed's subsequent smearing of the inspectors and former DTI Minister Michael Howard has been used to discredit the report.

However, its findings will not be ignored by the Home Office in justifying why Fayed has been refused a British passport when the judicial review of that decision takes place in October. That is if it is not decided to swallow the objections. After all, how can a man fit to be seen with the Queen and entertain the mother of the man who will be king only weeks before be a crook?

The Royals have already been saved embarrassment by the sudden delay in Fayed's libel action against *Vanity Fair*. This was also due to run and run from October but has been put back to next year after the magazine hit Fayed with hundreds of pages of documents.

The September 1995 *Vanity Fair* article, like the DTI report, is constantly ignored by Fayed fans. Understandably, as Fayed complains it falsely accuses Diana's putative father-in-law of being a sexual harasser who uses secretaries for services other than typing and chases them round his office trying to stuff money, failing anything else, into their cleavage. It also accuses him of being a crude racist and, unlike the Princess, a charity humbug plus much more besides.

Whether next year Fayed will take the stand and face a public grilling akin to that he underwent in private with the DTI remains to be seen. Last year Fayed paid off former senior employee Christoph Bettermann who had sued him for libel — the usual Fayed claim of fraud.

Fayed's cultivation of the Royal family mirrors the successful gambit he used not just with the Tories but with the rulers of Haiti and Dubai. All ended in tears.

Fayed arrived in Haiti in 1964 claiming to be an Arab sheikh and romanced dictator "Papa Doc" Duvalier's favourite daughter. After obtaining several valuable concessions he left in a hurry. The DTI report accused him of a "substantial deceit" depriving one of the poorest countries of over $100,000 (millions today) "it could ill afford to lose". Just the sort of action to impress the Queen of Hearts! Fayed also fell out with the Makhtoums who rule Dubai over money from the local trade centre he managed.

Princess Diana's father Lord Spencer was on the Fayed tab long ago. He turned up to toast the Fayeds only days after the DTI report was published in 1990. Diana's step-mother is still a Fayed team player. So the Princess of Wales's association with a man branded a liar and a cheat comes as no surprise.

What she and the Royal family must hope is that her relationship with Dodi has not been recorded for posterity in the same way as the visit to the Ritz by one of Fayed's most senior aides with a lady other than his wife.

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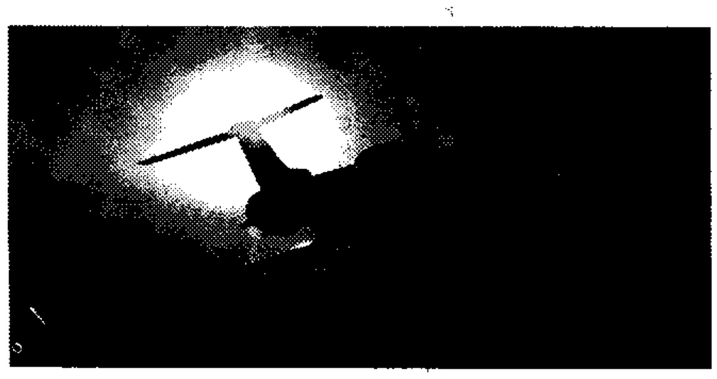

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Detective Story

CHRISTOPHER MORE, a wealthy private detective based in Manchester and Florida, is rarely mentioned in British newspapers. Perhaps it is something to do with his rather intimidatory style: last week a New York lawyer described him as "the British p.i. who thinks he is James Bond".

Just how seriously Chris More is taken in Fleet Street became clear on 20 July, when three Sunday newspapers reported that the Littlewoods heiress, Lady Grantchester, her brother, John Moores, and her son, James Suenson-Taylor, were being sued in Miami for £60m. Fifteen defendants are accused of racketeering, mail fraud and employing a Hambro subsidiary called Network Security Management to bug the US phone-billing system and steal from the Florida home of Douglas Leese, 70, a millionaire British businessman who is one of Littlewoods' main rivals.

In their lengthy stories, neither Nick Buckley and Tony Hetherington of the *Mail on Sunday*, nor Chris Blackhurst of the *Independent on Sunday*, nor an unnamed *Sunday Times* reporter happened to mention that one of Lady Grantchester's co-defendants was ... Chris More.

A week later, there was an equally conspicuous silence in the *Manchester Evening News* after the same Christopher More had appeared in Manchester City magistrates' court to deny assaulting a press agency reporter and a woman press photographer outside the city's crown court. More was convicted and ordered to pay £175 costs, but got an absolute discharge. Though half the reporters in Manchester were covering the case, none of them published a word.

More faces a sterner prosecutor in Florida. David Jaroslavicz, Douglas Leese's New York lawyer, claims that More and 14 other defendants "stole and converted highly confidential information from used typewriter ribbons, illegally diverted telephone bills and contacted persons identified in those records under false pretences. The defendants' ongoing and related activities in furtherance of their improper goals constitute a 'pattern of racketeering activity'."

Three weeks ago, as he returned to his New York office from London, Jaroslavicz said: "I still need to know more about the background of Mr Chris More."

Perhaps the *Eye* can assist. Back in 1983, More was a small-time local gumshoe in Preston, Lancashire, investigating the Labour Party chums of "socialist millionaire" Owen Oyston. Armed with a war-chest of £20,000 from a rich Blackpool Tory, Bill Harrison, More was hired by eccentric ratepayers' leader Michael Murrin (see *Eyes* passim) to expose Preston's deputy Labour leader, Frank McGrath. Despite the obvious dangers of breaching the Official Secrets Act, More penetrated the Inland Revenue system and produced a detailed report listing the exact earnings of McGrath and his wife for the previous six years.

Encouraged by this *coup*, Chris More then moved his business to Manchester and took up residence in The Mount, a mansion that dominates the Cheshire village of Compstall — whence he moved earlier this year to an even bigger house in Lymm, Cheshire. Without advertising, or even listing his number in the phone book, he became "a very rich man" — as he boasted recently to a local hack.

A rather frightening man, too. Last year, while Owen Oyston was on trial for rape, More somehow acquired a glossy pro-Oyston pamphlet, *The Oyston File*, which had been compiled by Andrew Rosthorn, a local hack. The hapless Rosthorn was then subjected to a lengthy, tape-recorded interrogation and forced to name a string of journalists who had contributed to *The Oyston File*.

More called their bosses, including at least one Fleet Street editor, and played them his tapes — complete with Rosthorn's pathetic attempts to avoid naming one contributor who was "going in for open-heart surgery next month". Then he called Rosthorn to tell him that his punishment would be exposure in the next issue of the *Sunday Times*. Sure enough, the paper duly reported that "as Oyston begins his jail sentence this weekend, sources revealed that police believe some freelance journalists contacted models in an attempt to persuade them to accept money for their stories, a move that could have led to them being discredited as witnesses at the trial". Rosthorn was not named, but easily identified as a "former Fleet Street reporter" denying he was a "hired reptile".

No wonder the other reptiles are keeping their heads down.

Dodi the 'Producer'

LAST YEAR the *Daily Mail*'s "diarist" Nigel Dempster ran a couple of items about Dodi Fayed and Winona Ryder. First Dumpster reported that Dodo was "squiring" the actress — quite possibly a fantasy of his, but certainly no more than a nightmare for her. Then, more than slightly improbably, he reported that Fayed was planning to cast Ryder in a planned live version of *Peter Pan*.

Possibly having realised that all this was rubbish, Dumpster dropped the subject. But when the Dodi-Di story broke, the *Mail*'s subs constructed a front page story by-lined "Nigel Dempster and Richard Kay". Creative use of cuttings resulted in a ludicrous tribute to "Oscar-winning film producer Dodi". Total fiction, but quickly picked up on by other hacks who foolishly expected accuracy from Dumpster and Kay. (To be fair, Nige did better the following day, quoting Tiny Rowland as saying that "Dodi and she are perfect for each other — they are both as thick as two planks".)

A quick check with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles establishes that there is no record of anybody called Dodi (or Mohamed) Fayed, either as a member or as an Oscar recipient.

Similarly *Variety*'s production listings make no reference to Dodo as being one of the producers of the Oscar-winning *Chariots of Fire*. This is because the paper distinguishes between "producers" (who actually produce films) and "executive producers" — people who might have invested in a film, slept with one of the producers or be related to someone important. Producers get credits and awards, executive producers get sneered at. Dodo's "executive producer" credit on *Chariots* came about solely because of daddy's investment in the film.

Dodo's stock in LA will not increase following the reappearance of notorious hack Gordon Thomas (see *Eyes* passim). To quote the *Mail*'s Richard Kay: "Dodi has invited the Princess to co-produce a Hollywood film... Gordon Thomas, who has written the screenplay, said it covered many issues close to Diana's heart. Speaking from his Dublin home, he said 'I believe she has considered becoming involved in the motion film industry for some time...'"

Thomas is *persona non grata* in LA following a fabricated film project about Irish Olympic gold-winning swimmer Michelle Smith. Smith was surprised and flattered when Thomas told her Jodie Foster was interested in starring in her life story. Alas Foster knew nothing about it, because it was a Thomas fantasy. While "negotiating" with Smith, he was simultaneously (and unsuccessfully) trying to flog details of the fake Foster film to both the *Sunday Mirror* and the *Sunday Times*.

With Di around, Dodo and Thomas will doubtless continue to fool gullible hacks. But there's no chance of them ever being taken remotely seriously in Hollywood.

Dumpster, by the way, is nothing if not inconsistent. By 13 August he had reverted to praising dumbo Dodi. By Monday 18th he was referring to the "thick as two planks" 40-plus doughboy as "handsome young Egyptian Dodi Fayed".

EYE TOLD YOU SO

HULL'S former Lord Mayor, councillor John Black, is under investigation by Humberside fraud squad over a £42,000 expenses claim.

The *Eye* pointed out in May that Black, a close friend of John Prescott, had raked in extraordinary amounts of expenses cash. Shortly afterwards a po-faced Ian Crookham, chief executive of Hull council, wrote to tell *Eye* readers that a large part of the £42,000 was spent providing appropriate hospitality for important visiting dignitaries.

But he did not deny (*Eye* 927) that some of the money was claimed for a night at a hotel during a housing conference, even though the bill had already been paid by the council's housing department. Presumably this double claim was a mistake.

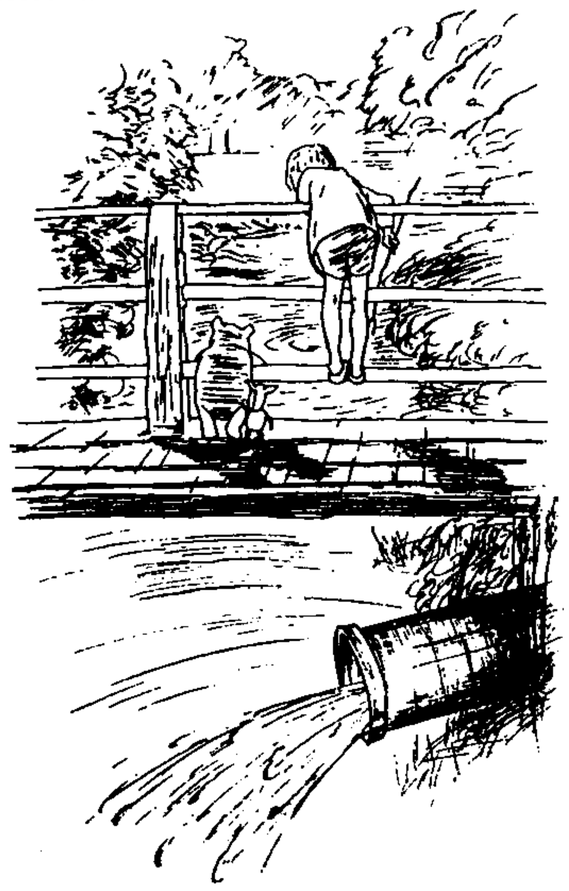
NUKES & NUKEMEN

THE Civil Service pulled its usual end-of-session trick on MPs. It set out deliberately to mislead Parliament.

A new MP, David Chaytor, had tabled an awkward question about plutonium flights over Britain. A written answer was tucked away in the back of the last day's Hansard, distributed after MPs had left on holiday. The flights are under heavy pressure from organisations such as Cumbria County Council, which worry about a plane crashing on the way to Sellafield. Chaytor asked the Environment/Transport Department about the International Atomic Energy Agency "recommendation" that individual states stop sending plutonium in the (current) type B packages.

Someone deep inside the ministry decided to be clever. He or she framed a suitably sniffy reply: "The Department is unaware of the IAEA making such a recommendation." An unsuspecting minister had to be found to put a name to it and Glenda Jackson was chosen. End of message, the ministry hoped.

Not quite. The document concerned is Tech. Doc. 702, sent to the British government in April 1993. The department is surely aware of it and was playing on the fact that it was IAEA "guidance" and not a "recommendation". It is the sort of slick cover-up that would have pleased some members of the last government; the new lot were supposed to be different.



*"Well, it's not **my** stick!" exclaimed Piglet*

WATER NEWS

GOOD news for residents of Camborne and the tourists and surfers who visit North Cornwall beaches every summer. South West Water's sewage screening plant has finally gone on line.

The £700,000 scheme will remove the equivalent of five skip loads of floating sewage from the town's system every week which was previously discharged straight into the sea. Little wonder that SWW had to deal with water contamination by a micro-organism called cryptosporidium two years ago which left more than 100 people ill.

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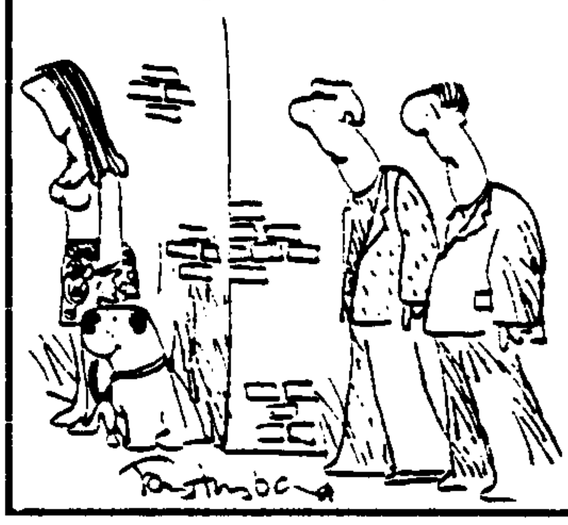

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JEFFREY BERNARD, The Spectator

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McLIBEL! See EYE HELP.

MI5/BBC Conspiracy http://pair.com/spook/

MAKE FRIENDS in AMERICA — See EYE CONTACT

SPEECHWRITING by MITCH MURRAY. See Page 31.

EYE WANT

I AM COMMISSIONED to write a Life and Times of Stephen Richard Dean (Eye 471). I would be grateful for any letters, recollections etc. All will be copied and returned and treated in the strictest confidence. Box 2031.

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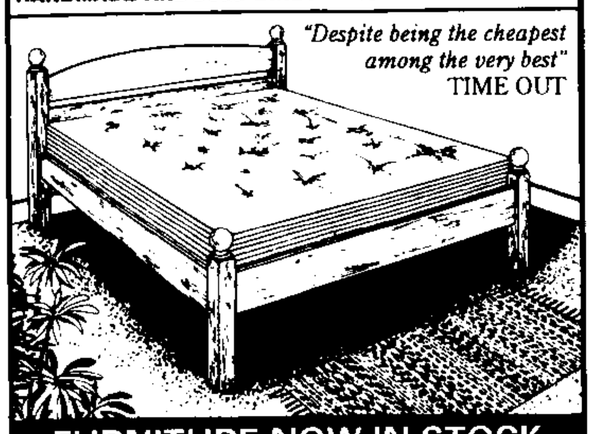

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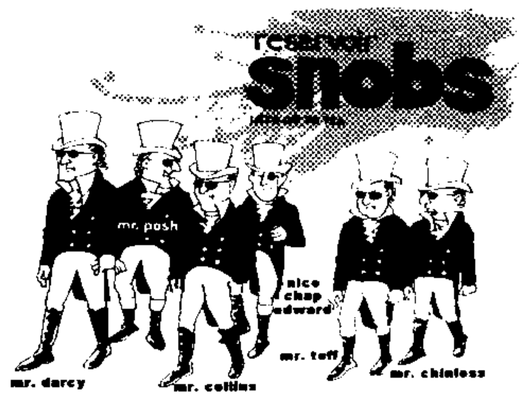

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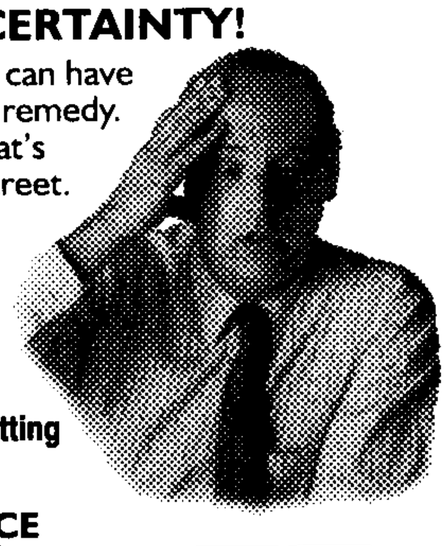

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